

# The CALENDAR *of Modern Letters*

VOLUME I  
NUMBER 2

APRIL  
1925

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## The Dithyrambic Spectator. An Essay on the Origins and Survivals of Art.

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### INTRODUCTION.

IF, in response to an immediate need, some industry requiring great skill comes into existence; and if the need is then removed, and the industry languishes, there is mostly no excuse for perpetuating the craft, however elaborately that has been developed in the process of meeting this vital demand. Most of the fine Arts are to-day in that position; only with the difference that their exercise is in itself so enjoyable that their various techniques, it is felt, should be perpetuated *for their own sake*. That is what was realised by the "Æsthete" of the Nineties, who coined the expression *ART for ART'S sake*. The arts had then for a century been in competition with industry, and it had come to be generally recognised that they could not survive, except as a group of privileged activities dissociated from the needs of life, which they no longer met so satisfactorily as many of the industries that had substituted mechanical process for manual dexterity and emotional formulæ. But these ancient and superseded industries were still superstitiously entrenched in men's conceit about their *Civilisation* (their way of referring to the exceptional activities of a handful of their kind, whose efforts their

malice delights to embarrass, but the results of which efforts they appropriate) and the devolution of these practically obsolete technical traditions was still in the hands of a specially-trained professional class.

As, however, we recede from the time when these arts were the only substitutes for nature—before machinery went straight to nature and eliminated the middleman, Man—the position of this “professional” nucleus becomes more and more precarious. In the great readjustment in the sensibility of the world which is in progress there are very powerful factors whose instincts will hardly allow the survival of this purely ornamental human fringe of “professional” *playing*. The human conceit that made it possible for this small privileged guild of specialists to claim the protection of “Civilisation” has received many rebuffs. The scandal of man’s “Origins” was the first ; and the scandal of the recent gigantic war is the last scandal, from which it is doubtful if the fair name of “Civilisation” will ever recover. The course that has been taken is not “to live it down,” but rather to “brazen it out.” “Civilisation” having become brazen in her new role of Whore of Babylon, she has a malignant squint for her traditional retainers and wears her high-brow ornaments with an unconcealed impatience. When she was a Madonna and claimed her descent from Simon Magus, she was the friend of every art. But as a tart she has her living to make ; as she ages she becomes more practical.

The Fine Arts to-day survive on the same basis (or that will soon be the case) as the Art of the hunter or *Sportsman*. Hunting, the supreme art and business of primitive life, survived in our civilisation as the most delightful pastime and a coveted privilege. So the fine arts, corresponding to no present need that a variety of industries cannot answer more effectively, the last survivals of the *hand* against the *machine*, but beaten by the machine in every contest involving a practical issue, must, if they survive at all, survive as a sport and the privilege of the wealthy, negligently indulged in, and not any longer as an object of serious devotion. The sport of hunting either large or small game is the symbol of an idle and strictly useless life ; and to-day the fox-hunter and the painter or poet are in the same category. All that is necessary is for the fox-hunter



to take to painting pictures and writing verse and the close association of these two occupations in the public mind will be effected.

Had the primitive hunter been presented suddenly with machine-guns, with which he could mow down his game in droves, he would not have troubled to practise his lonely and difficult art any more. Similarly, had the Peruvian potters been accommodated with the resources of a Staffordshire factory for producing pots, they would have immediately abandoned their archaic wheel. Since men in the aggregate, however, are made by their occupation, both the potter and the hunter would deteriorate, become parasitic on their machines, and on the engineer and inventor. But in neither case would that appear to them as a consideration of an order to appeal to a man or woman of the world.

A business that survives as a sport does so only when it has some pleasure-value or vanity-value. Shooting or trapping other animals has these values ; and also the pictorial representation of objects, the composing of music and performing on musical instruments, singing, literary composition, verbal dexterity, and so forth. In future probably what are now still "artists" by profession (for there are still people who on identity cards describe themselves in that way) will form a class similar to that of gamekeepers, huntsmen, horse trainers, sculptors' ghosts, and printers' devils. They will be the people who will keep the game, but not shoot at it, rear the horse, but not ride it. The actual act of art (whereby a picture is finally produced with delight, or a song sung with unction) will become of the same character as the laying of a foundation-stone, or rather the ceremonious fixing of the last tile on the roof, or the driving of the last rivet in the ship. It will be performed "while you are dressing for dinner." There will have to be, in short, a class of experts in the various arts, non-performers themselves (for there must be no professional competition) to coach and encourage with flattering remarks the wealthy performers. The pleasure-value of such performance will probably be regarded as considerable enough to make it worth while to preserve it. But its money-value (in the sense of its value to the man doing it, its value as an expensive pastime, not, of course, the value of what is produced, which will eventually

be openly admitted to be zero) will also assure it the status of an exclusively privileged pastime. Also it will be definitely recognised as a pastime only, with none of that unseemly competition with the agent-principle to which Lord Byron so rightly objected—that adulation lavished in his time on a man of letters (as though he had won a naval engagement) or on a musician (as though he had been the head of a noble house); or that competition that our present-day industrial magnate so justly resents in the Intelligence, as though it were a slight on the beauty of his power, or an insult to Mammon; or of that competition with “life” against which the vitalist philosopher of the egalitarian interregnum finds it his duty to protest. Whether it is your opinion that these Conditions would or would not promote the grandest and severest forms of artistic expression is immaterial, for there is clearly no alternative. In the Civilisation into which we are moving the fine arts can only survive on these terms. And whether in the upshot they should, from your standpoint, deteriorate or improve, they must undergo a very great transformation.

The money value of *leisure*—which is a condition of much artistic production—is now assessed. When the “Man of Genius” was respected by a public more rustic than ours, and who also had no incentive to compete with genius, as its interests were of such an opposite order; a public who never dreamt how their dissimilar interests might be combined to the advantage of the lesser; then the leisure that the “Man of Genius” enjoyed was accepted as part of the natural order of things. But with a better sense of values, people to-day have valued leisure, and they price it very high. Simultaneously they do not regard the fine arts as the preserve of “genius,” but as an activity with a pleasure-value and vanity-value by no means negligible, but which up to the present has selfishly been monopolised by “geniuses” and other specialists. Instead of this dirty *professional* workshop (they say), the fine arts should constitute a sort of grown-up nursery where the rich can be kept young, dabbling and dreaming in studios and galleries. In this way these two valuable things, *leisure* and the *satisfaction of artistic performance* should not go begging and waste their sweetness (or rather their money value) on people who already have more genius than they have any right



to, or need for, or money to support—that is, who possess something for which they have not paid in hard cash, and who almost unlawfully secrete something that it is impossible to get at, or of which it is impossible to supervise the issue.

*“Saint-Amant n'eut du ciel que sa veine en partage,  
L'habit qu'il eût sur lui fut son seul héritage.”*

The heroic immaterial wealth bombastically described by Boileau, with the leisure that it always claimed as other forms of wealth claim leisure, is to-day illegal, for it is a reactionary possession ; and the only thing that is recognised as entitled to put the egalitarian law at defiance in contemporary society is money. No other possession takes that or any other privileges with it. And the spoils of “Genius” in the revolution of our taste is very strictly the perquisite and preserve of the wealthy. None of the furniture or jewellery or other dazzling possessions of “Genius” goes to the crowd, in whose name “Genius” is proscribed and dispossessed. That portion of it that it is impossible to despoil (until Science has discovered some means) must be ignored as far as possible, on the principle that establishes a blind spot in the brain where it is liable to come in contact with those other tricks of nature so disconcerting to the civilised, irreducible standing outrages, such as the lavatory or war. The only difference is that those time-honoured scandals tend to be rescued from obscurity and dishonour, and there is a strong feeling that they have been misunderstood or treated with unnecessary superiority by the ape-like creature who depended on them for his existence or his virility ; whereas those so much vaunted intellectual qualities of his, on whose behalf his more animal functions suffered a prolonged eclipse, are, with the natural tact of revenge, consigned to the oubliettes and dustbins to which formally he banished his “animal” functions. There is, in short, a price on the man-ape's *head* ; and contrariwise, his more specialised organs receive many flattering attentions.

The standard of workmanship when a fine art is one of the “arts of life” is necessarily high and exacting. But to-day none of the pictorial and plastic arts, at least, are any more than an adjunct to the critical and historic faculty. The contemporary audience is essentially an audience of critics,

that is to say, they are as active as the performer, who, indeed, exists chiefly in order that the critic may *act*—as a Critic. The only *rationale* of the professional artist to-day is to provide the critic with material for criticism ; it is no longer to give delight or to serve any useful end. And were it not for this, the whole elaborate pretence that the fine arts are still an effective part of our life would be immediately abandoned. There is, of course, the other motive for clinging to this pretence ; the motive of respectability ; it is felt that the public demise *en masse* of every art would be the crowning scandal of all. The fine arts are the last rags of a by now hardly even laughable respectability. But that is scarcely any longer a serious difficulty. It is unlikely that these rags would be put on every morning and taken off every night, if it were not for the requirements of this critical faculty, this new “professionalism” of the spectator. There would be no “professional” performers if the audience had not become in some sense a “professional” audience.

But already as the technical standard declines (except for a very few privileged star performers) the performers are more often than not recruited directly from the audience, and return to the audience when their summary performances are terminated. The community of the stage and of the auditorium is becoming absolute. And it is hardly any longer correct to refer to this audience as composed of critics ; for the critic is, on the one hand, enough of an amateur performer to take a part, and on the other, enough of a passive and voluptuous spectator to get a thrill of sorts ; always, at all events, too much of both to be unbiased. At the end of this essay this fusion will be seen to bear a strong resemblance to the triumph of the *ῥελονταί*, as described by Aristotle ; or, in that contemporary school of anthropology and folk-lore that has given a new lease of life to classical research originating with the work of Sir James Frazer, as traced by Miss Harrison in her popular book, *Art and Ritual*. The *critic* stage is now half way between the spectator and the full effective crowd-performer.

The first part of this essay will briefly expound a recent and brilliant account of the origin of the fine arts, an account with a bias directed to show the supremely vital character of their earliest functions. And from that I will pass to a very



different account of their origin, also with a bias—but this time an un-intelligent, doctrinaire, and political bias—in favour of vitalist explanation; namely, that contained in Miss Harrison's little book.

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THAT Art started on its long career—or rather that it first started being a substantial factor in human life—as a sort of Elixir, or Life-giver, is what Dr. Elliot Smith's book, *The Evolution of the Dragon*, sets out to show. That it was hand-in-hand not only with magic, but with the doctor and anatomist, that Art made its debut; that the site of its first serious efforts was Egypt; and that it began as a purveyor of immortality, he affirms. ("The sculptor who carved the portrait-statues for the Egyptian's tomb was called *sa'nh*, 'he who causes to live,' and the word 'to fashion' (*ms*) a statue is to all appearance identical with (*ns*) 'to give birth'"). It was hand-in-hand with the Great Mother or with Aphrodite, surrounded by the vulvas of cowrie shells, and assisted by mandrake roots, in the same workshop as the embalmer and primitive physician, that the Artist began his terrestrial career.

"In delving into the remotely distant history of our species we cannot fail to be impressed with the persistence with which, throughout the whole of his career, man (of the species *sapiens*) has been seeking for an elixir of life, to give added 'vitality' to the dead (whose existence was not consciously regarded as ended), to prolong the days of active life to the living, to restore youth, and to protect his own life from all assaults, not merely of time, but also of circumstance."

The great imaginative interest of this book of Dr. Elliot Smith is further that it shows the statue evolving out of the corpse, and how closely the sculptor's and painter's art was imitational and vitalist in its earliest destiny.

*Mummification* is picked out as the great fecundating fact of Egyptian life from which world-civilisation has ensued.

In *The Evolution of the Dragon* he sets out to trace the effects throughout the world, wherever the Egyptian influence penetrated, of, this peculiar concrete necromancy, as Diodorus calls it. The past became as important as the future, and

these strangely preserved inanimate figures, from a distant reality carried in themselves a host of questions. They were a living portrait gallery almost, a waxwork, not an art. The mummy symbolized in fact the extremely vitalist character of the Egyptian view of art's functions.

I suppose that Dr. Elliot Smith's identification of the birth of culture with mummification—or of the birth of the Great Mother with the cowrie shell—would be called a *theory*. But in the sort of historical research in which he is engaged the word *theory* should not be given the same meaning as in a more exact research. Such an identification should probably be regarded as a genial expedient for the effective launching of a more imaginatively fused information. It is with him a habit almost; and an extremely attractive and unusual one, an almost necessary simplification. You see isolated for you at the beginning of time the EMBALMER, bending over a CORPSE. And from the very simple conjunction of these two figures, representing the function of PRESERVATION and CONTINUITY, you see the whole world, from Ireland to Peru, bursting into cultural bloom.

As another good example of Dr. Elliot Smith's method, the few lines of literary simplification by which the rise of Chinese culture is reduced to a thing as simple as the cowrie shell, or as the mummy, can be cited. Only instead of the cowrie shell or the mummy, it is *jade*.

He is, in his pursuit of the Dragon, considering the *thunder-ball* of the Chinese dragon. It is not a *thunder-ball*, however, he thinks; but the dragon's ball is the pearl-moon, by swallowing which he is able to supply the fertilising rain. "Was the ball originally also a pearl, not of Buddhism, but of Taoism?" de Visser has asked.

"In reply to this question I may call attention to the fact that the germs of civilisation were first planted in China by people strongly imbued with the belief that the pearl was the quintessence of life-giving and prosperity-composing powers; it was not only identified with the moon, but also was itself a particle of moon-substance which fell as dew on the gaping oyster. It was the very people who held such views about pearls and gold who, when searching for alluvial gold and freshwater pearls in Turkestan, were responsible for transferring



these same life-giving properties to jade ; and the magical value thus attached to jade was the nucleus, so to speak, around which the earliest civilisation of China was crystallised." So you see Siberian civilisation attaching life-giving properties to *jade*, and the wonderful civilisation of China resulting from the elixir.

Returning to Dr. Elliot Smith's development of everything out of the embalmer's workshop, he reviews the unlikelihood at first sight that such a practice should have had such far-reaching effects as he claims for it. Can this fantastic and unpleasant habit of preserving their dead have had the reverberations in culture, political and social life, in the development of arts and crafts—in short, all that we describe as civilisation ? Nevertheless, he asserts, it had.

The arts and crafts of the carpenter and stonemason, architecture, the shaping of religious belief and ritual practices (developing in connection with the evolution of the temple and the conception of a material resurrection) he enumerates as the direct tributaries of this all-important "gruesome" art.

Furthermore, it was mainly responsible for the maritime initiative of the Egyptians. It was the resins and balsams used in embalming in the funerary practices and in the temples that were the main incentives to their voyages in the Mediterranean and Red Sea. And it was these surprising habits acquired in the service of this corpse and in seeking for the substances required for its preservation, that ultimately induced them to push further afield. Hence the heliolithic culture, and, according to this writer, all our civilization.

There are also "the manifold ways in which the practice of mummification reflected the history of medicine and pharmacy. By accustoming the Egyptians, through thirty centuries, to the idea of cutting the human corpse, it made it possible for Greek physicians of the Ptolemaic and later ages to initiate in Alexandria the systematic dissection of the human body which popular prejudice forbade elsewhere, and especially Greece itself. Upon this formulation the knowledge of anatomy and the science of medicine has been built up."

So Dr. Elliot Smith concludes, "the vague and ill-defined ideas of physiology and psychology, which had probably been developing since Aurignacian times in Europe, were suddenly

crystallised into a coherent structure and definite form by the musings of the Egyptian embalmer."

It may be that as a doctor Prof. Elliot Smith was especially disposed to choose this anatomical fact : from that standpoint it may in a sense be a doctor's dream of civilisation growing around the operating-table. His own brilliant theoretic structure has originated in that way : for it was during the period of eleven years as a doctor in a Cairo hospital, no doubt, that all his subsequent research received its original stimulation. It would be natural in that way that he should weave his own destiny into his theories. While there, many desiccated bodies that had been buried five thousand years before, and which had been preserved in the hot Egyptian gravel, were brought to him for dissection. He would find in the intestines of the proto-Egyptian the bones of fish off which he had made his last meal, and would find in the throat of a child the skinned body of a mouse, administered in this way when it was *in extremis* as the supreme remedy for a child in that condition. He lived to that extent in a magically preserved morgue ; and even the atmosphere of the country must have seemed to conspire in the staging of the famous Living Death invented—or formulated—by the Egyptians.

You only have to walk into a museum gallery devoted to Egyptian art to recognise at once that you are walking into a sort of churchyard or very curious sort of undertaker's shop. Tho'th, in massive trutination, is weighing life against death : and sure enough the form life takes on this occasion is that of *art*. Indeed, in dynastic Egypt, *art* comes nearer to being *life* than at any other recorded period ; and apparently for the reason that it was *death*.

Plastic or graphic art, indeed, necessarily flourishes in the mortuary. The *living death* that is represented by Egyptian culture is the very place for the sculptor and painter to thrive in. A vivid materialistic life (such as the Egyptian population, no doubt, lived, but which was not allowed to migrate without hushing itself into the tombs and temples), wherever lived, produces, at its best, some coloured easy popular homologue of the Japanese print. At its worst, it produces the feeble gibberish of the contemporary railway bookstall, the designs and stories of the popular magazines. Great art is, for the



hurried and unexact standards of this quick unconscious life, a useless instrument—such life itself resembling a railway station, or railway carriage, the things of which it is specifically composed made for its hurried uses, left on the seat when the train is left, and swept up as rubbish at the terminus.

But the premium or fine paid by great Pharaohs for leases in the other world is put aside in this world for the upkeep of vast imitation establishments peopled by imitation immortals : in other words, for building, sculpting, and recording on a giant scale worthy of eternity. The Egyptian sepulchre and temple is, actually, a building already in another life : and it is replete with all the massive state of an ambitious, and almost endless, continuity.

Into the Egyptian *living death*, again, a good deal of the *rigor mortis* has passed ; and that suits art admirably. It asks nothing better than a corpse, and thrives on bones. Did not Cezanne bellow at his sitter when he fell off the chair, “ You’re moving ! Les pommes, ça ne bouge pas ! ” He preferred apples, in short, not because he otherwise discriminated between men and apples, but because men moved, whereas apples did not.

But there was an even further stroke of luck for the Egyptian craftsman. That was that the corpse or the corpse-statue had to be a particularly *lively* one. This, of course, might go too far : as can be gathered from the account of the naturalism that this life-obsession engendered, especially as regards the eye. This sparkling eye threatened the whole structure of Egyptian art, and probably contributed to its downfall.

The sculptor, always pre-occupied with the *life-like* and nothing else, arrived at last at startlingly natural images in stone or wood of the grandees he was commissioned to immortalise. With paint he improved still further his facsimile. But still there was something lacking, apart from the movement of life, that even he could not give. The EYE was the last thing to resist his ingenuity. But at last he had that shining, coloured and marvellously alive as well. His statue, although so still, now sparkled and lived.

This triumph of the imitative art was not regarded by the Egyptian as a *tour de force*, however—not one of art, or rather not *for* art. The sculptor, he thought, *had made the statue*

*live*. Death's psychic evulsion was reversed, the soul had been put back by this craftsman, into the dead. It was a "living image." The eyes themselves were regarded as one of the chief sources of the vitality which had been conferred upon the statue.

According to the most fanatical canons of art, and according also to many quite temperate canons, these statues are not the best produced in Egypt: These sparkling eyes, had the Egyptians possessed the mechanical equipment, with the centuries of positive research behind them, that we have, would soon have moved. Thereby, from the artist's point of view, they would have come into competition with apples, the advantage remaining heavily on the side of the fruit. But luckily the liaison between art and science had not then been effected. There was a lacuna in human ingenuity on the hither side of which, like an island nation, art prospered.

The information brilliantly presented by Dr. Elliot Smith about all this ferment of creative intelligence around the corpses of Egyptian magnates is of the greatest importance for the understanding not only of Egyptian art, but of art altogether. The more you reflect on this information, the more you are convinced how very much to be preferred a dead magnate is to a live one. "There's a great deal to be said for being dead" (or for the incessant contemplation of death) on the part of a person sitting for his or her portrait. These death-masks, mouldings like a diver's scaphander for the *last plunge*, all this work on death's frontiers where only the embalmer and the portraitist stood between some wealthy person and extinction, made these two fine fellows into a kind of death profiteers. Or if they were never allowed to line their pockets, at least they had more work than they have ever had since. What has become of the embalmer? as an artist you cannot help wondering. He has disappeared, only the artist is left. But if the portraitist could meet the embalmer now, what a tale he would have to tell! He would have to say to him, "Things is not what they was! Don't you worry: you're better where you are—though it is along of all those Pharaohs—damn their eyes!")

Dr. Elliot Smith goes through all the minutiae of this intensive science developed by the embalmer and the portraitist



together. To preserve the actual tissues of the body of the dead man handed over to them intact, and to disturb throughout the processes of evisceration and the ceremonial accompanying it, the living appearance as little as possible—that was the burden of the embalmer's thoughts: and the portraitist was busy with the manufacture of his stone or wooden doubles. The embalmer was the *first* artist, but as it was found that he could not achieve what was desired, during twenty-five centuries this ingenious ghoul wrestled with the refractory human material. Then in the XXist dynasty he was at last satisfied, and everybody else also, that the trick had been done.

“By means of linen wrappings wound round the body, impregnated with the resinous paste (stucco being alternately used) and moulded in against the limbs, the organs of reproduction especially emphasised and carefully treated, it was sought to preserve in facsimile the living man. On the linen-enveloped head, eyes would be painted to increase the lifelike appearance.”

First the “reserve head” of Egyptian archæology, a large stone head, was placed with the mummy in the tomb, and later a life-size statue.

It was, Dr. Elliot Smith thinks, from contemplating these simulacra (the life-size statue and the mummy) that the Egyptian notions of life and death became reinforced and assumed the proportions that they did.

The contemplation of the nature of life and death derived naturally, with the earlier people, from this incessant spectacle of the embalmed dead. What was lacking—they must have asked themselves—in these physically intact bodies, to prevent them from continuing to behave like living beings?

To regard the image in the mirror, or the thought or image in the mind, as being as real as its original, or the shadow as the substance, has characterised everywhere the primitive mind. “Everything he (the Egyptian) knew or thought of,” in Professor Sayce's words, “had its double.” The Egyptian Other-world was such a *double*. The *Ka* was a double: and the statue of the portraitist was in the nature of a shadow.

The mortuary philosophy of the Egyptians, in earlier times, found expression in a ritual designed to convey the breath of

life to the work of the sculptor. The odour and sweat of the body was represented by unguents. Offerings of blood were supposed to supply the necessary oil for the revivification of the heart of the statue of the deceased in the Ka-house; and incense to supply the odour of human sweat and cosmetics.

In the *Migrations of Early Culture*, Dr. Elliot Smith attributed the making of statues directly to the practice of mummification: and in spite of Dr. Alan Gardiner, he is still disposed to stick to this order—namely, mummy first, statue after: though his distinguished colleague would prefer that they were placed abreast of each other.

“It is clear that this conception of the possibility of a life beyond the grave assumed a more concrete form when it was realised that the body itself could be rendered incorruptible and its distinctive traits could be kept alive by means of a portrait-statue. There are reasons for supposing that primitive man did not realise or contemplate the possibility of his own existence coming to an end. . . . If a corpse were destroyed or underwent a process of natural disintegration, the fact was brought home to him that death had occurred.”

The preservation of the body (implying continuance of existence), and the care lavished on it, in this way became intelligible.

But when the statue took over the function of representing the deceased, a dwelling was provided for it above ground. This developed into the temple, where the relatives and friends of the dead came and made the offerings of food which were regarded as essential for the maintenance of posthumous existence. The evolution of the temple was thus the direct outcome of the ideas that grew up in connection with the preservation of the dead. For at first it was nothing more than the dwelling-place of the unanimated dead. The full-fledged temple had its origin in the apotheosis of the dead king. (Osiris, for instance, was a dead king.)

Whether the portraitist or the embalmer are at the bottom of it all, or whether they shared the honours, does not very much matter. The participation of both is proved. And it was when they came to the surface out of the scene of their subterranean activities, and the architect stepped in, that



Egyptian art reached its stage of evident and multiform mastery. And it is about that that we are talking.

As I have already mentioned, the sculptor who modelled the portrait-statue was called "he who causes to live," and the word "to fashion" a statue is identical with that which means "to give birth." The god Ptah created man by modelling his form in clay. Similarly the life-giving sculptor made the portrait which was to be the means of securing a perpetuation of existence when it was animated through the mouth-opening, by libations and incense.

The sculptor, the humble incarnation of the god Ptah (who was, of course, a Pharaoh), was only half a god : for the statue, once it was made, had to be brought to life ; and this was effected with considerable ceremony (which was, of course, where the priest came in) by the descent of some animating principle from the sky or elsewhere.

Whether the sculptor ultimately must share with his lugubrious friend, the embalmer, the honour of starting off those varied and superb activities or not, there is one thing that he seems certainly to have been responsible for ; that is, the *ka* or soul. The Egyptian *ka*, the Italian *genius*, the Greek *ψυχή*, the Iranian *fravashi* are similar phenomena : so with or without the sculptor they no doubt came into existence in conformity with some bias of the intellect independent of such accidents as the "double" making of the portrait-sculptor. Indeed, Dr. Elliot Smith (again, no doubt, here prompted to obstetric explanations by his training) insists on the placenta theory of psychic origins.

"The *ka* is not simply identical with the breath of life or *animus*, as Burnet supposes," says Dr. Elliot Smith, "but has a wider significance. The adoption of the conception of the *ka* as a sort of guardian angel which finds its appropriate habitation in a statue that has been animated does not necessarily conflict with the view so concretely and unmistakably represented in the tomb pictures that the *ka* is also a double who is born along with the individual."

"The development of the custom of making statues of the dead necessarily raised for solution the problem of explaining the deceased's two bodies, his actual mummy and his portrait stone. During life on earth his vital principle dwelt in the

former, except on those occasions when the man was asleep. His actual body also gave expression to the varied attributes of his personality. But after death the statue became the dwelling-place of the manifestations of the spirit of vitality."

It was not by showing men their *kas* or souls that the sculptor produced this result, but merely by providing an ancient superstition with suitable quarters—namely, a life-size duplicate of the body. The idea of the soul originated in the belief of an independent existence of something that is *you* or *I* apart from our bodies, both sleep and death providing their corroborative evidence.

The Roman *genius*, according to Dr. Aust (*Relig. der Römer*), works out as a rather phallic thumbling; and there is no reason to suppose that the Egyptians (certainly not behind other people in their predilection for symbols of fertility, and in their identification of man's fertility with the earth) would not have made their *ka* on some such analogy. But in one form or another the notion of a "double" is almost ineradicable. As one of the strangest examples of its persistence, Schopenhauer provides us with an example. He would have been as emphatic as a Behaviorist in condemning this particularly pitiable fiction. The man going to him in search of an assurance of *selfhood* would have received little satisfaction. The deluded creature longing for some stupid promise of a perpetuation of *anything* contingent on the *principium individuationis* by whose grace we live, would have received the full weight of his German scorn. Yet in an essay (*On apparent design in the fate of the individual*) he supplies every individual (without being asked) with a *genius* or double. This brother lurks in the unconscious regions of the Will. But he watches over the destiny of his charge with infinite foresight and devotion.

Schopenhauer explains the mechanism of this double in a curious way. He reminds his reader of his dreams, and especially of dreams in which his sex centres are involved. He draws our attention (he always assumes that his readers are men, of course) to the fact that sometimes we compass our wishes, couple with some phantom, and an emission takes place; whereas at other times, try as we will to achieve this result, some obstacle interposes, and we are unable to do so. That



obstacle, he says, is the Will that looks after us ; our little personal Will, who does not think it would be good for us, and so interferes. And similarly in waking life, engaged in incessant struggle with this other type of what we call living phantom, there is a similarly solicitous interested third party, possessing all the resources of the Unconscious, that intervenes, for our good, in our affairs.

If the Egyptian sculptor's work gave rise to the notion of the *ka* or double, or gave it substance, he was certainly availing himself of one of the chief securities of plastic or graphic art. No man, I believe, who has an elaborate portrait painted or sculpted of himself, is without an instinctive sense that an *alter ego* is coming into existence under the painter's or sculptor's hand. It might be said (if a painter were speculating as to whether so-and-so would have his portrait painted or not) that the man whose instinct would favour cremation would *not* have his portrait painted ; whereas the man inclined to burial without cremation, other things being equal, would. But interfering with such deep-seated instincts in "enlightened" people is a very anxious and thankless occupation : and the portraitist to-day, however well paid he is, deserves every penny he gets.

But where this art (equally it appears a child of life and death) was nearest to those conditions most favourable to art was in the nature of the *truth* required. It had its chance of perfection because it was working for *the other world*. The artist could be said indeed to be living as much in one world as in the other. People's small vanities do not transgress death very readily, though their mortal needs were supposed by the Egyptians to accompany them. They do not want so much to be *beautiful*, under such circumstances, as to be *like themselves*, terribly and truly like. And so long as they think that such things as the earlier dynastic sculpture are like them, the artist is at the zenith of his opportunity. (As they become more knowing or mechanical, the art *pari passu* becomes less good.) The art of the *perruquier* or dressmaker, though it has its place, has given way in Egyptian art to the great creative instincts of our kind. To be true rather than false was the function of the Egyptian artist.

Any account of the origins of art given us by Dr. Elliot

Smith necessarily confines us, to begin with, to the banks of the Nile ; for there and nowhere else, he says, all civilisation saw the light. Whether this necessary restriction has given a particular twist to his version—which we have just surveyed—or not, it remains a very interesting one. And whatever the ultimate fate of his theory of Egyptian priority in civilisation, there is nothing *behind* Egypt that has been so far discovered that can be said to interfere with its claim to origination. When we are examining a work of Egyptian art, it is even an assumption that we cannot entirely dispense with that here we may be confronted with the first tremendous human effort, that perhaps we may have been dissipating ever since, and which is unlikely to be repeated. In touch in an organised way with a supernatural world of whose potentialities we can form no conception, the art of Egypt is as rare and irreplaceable a thing as some communication dropped from another planet on our earth would be.

For Dr. Elliot Smith, then, the practice of plastic art, which is one of the most peculiar activities of human beings, developed body to body with the corpses of pharaohonic grandees. It was thus a superhuman effort of *imitation*. Because it was all carried out not in the interests of this life, and its vanities, but for the Other-world, it was able to be *true*. This facsimile truth, imposed on a certain naïf hieratic gaucherie, is all there is to it.

In the first place, had the art of Egypt been nothing but that—and a great deal of it, especially later work, is not much more—we should not have heard so much about it. This *corps-à-corps* imitation of the human form, its translation into a stone or wood facsimile, leaves out of count the great wealth of abstract design, with all its peculiar and untranslatable severity of imagery, which is equally a feature of Egyptian art. Enamelled plates, perfume spoons, vases, amulets, stools, borders and facings of all sorts, every form of applied art, show an almost inhuman wedding of what is a sort of geometric power with a particular æsthetic principle. Then the beauty of the Canopic jars, which are amongst the earliest inventions of Egyptian art (examples dating to the Old Kingdom, we are told), cannot be put down to the practical requirements of evisceration. The wall and ceiling decorations of the mastabas



are the reverse of *imitation*. They are as mathematical, intricate, and in contradiction to the disorder of the natural world as musical composition or geometry. If you add to this the superb architectural remains, and the records that we have of their secular building activities, you arrive at a mass of creative work in the midst of which the exact portrait study of the deceased becomes unimportant as *art*. It is no more important to the study of the origin of this instinct than is the singular means taken in the case of the statue of the Pharaoh Mycerinus to ensure its perduration by rooting it in the virgin rock.

This, of course, does not interfere with the theory of how all this extraordinary harvest of intellectual achievement was made possible by the early business association of the sculptor and embalmer. But it reduces this theory of the origin of art in Egypt to a practical question, which has no bearing on the essential function of art. It is an account of the social conditions or accidents that are likely to enable an artist to do his art: not an account of the inner process whereby a person becomes an artist, or what art *is*. If there were a man in London who was prepared to pay two thousand pounds to have a large music room and hall, say, or billiard, bathroom, and hall, decorated (instead of buying a Daimler), and if such a man had some taste, of a rather severe and unusual nature, then I should be able to indicate to this man where he could find an artist who could be entrusted with this commission. Such a patron does not exist, of course: but Egypt bred such patrons like flies, under the shadow of the Other-world, and with the help of the theory of the immortality of the soul. But that does not tell you anything about *art*, but about the opportunities that bring it to flower. Indeed, the specific examples of Egyptian art that are the closest to this origin in a practical requirement are the least interesting things in that art.

[The second, and last, part of Mr. Wyndham Lewis's essay, which discusses recent theories on the relation between Art and Ritual in Greek civilisation, will be published next month.]

## Poems

By PETER QUENNELL.

### Leviathan.

I.

Leviathan drives his broad and painted face,  
With the surge dumbly rippling round his lips,  
Toward the Atlantid shore ;  
Not flat and golden like the cherubim,  
Or a face round and womanish like the seraphim,  
But thick and barbed—the broad, barbed cheeks of Donne.  
Beneath he stretched his hands to the sea-forests,  
Obscure and thick, with the cool freshes under,  
Lifts his surprised brows to the sky's milky light,  
New come from the abyss.

While a faint radiance, webbed from the wave's substance,  
Clung to his changing limbs and his coiled body,  
Reddening, making them darker than the sea,  
Or half translucent.

And when the mouths of Atlantean brooks  
Struck on his mouth with taste of sudden cold  
And wound his shoulders like embracing hands,  
He put out both thick palms and felt the shallows.  
The salt had scurfed his body with white fire  
And knotted the thick hair between his breasts—  
And as he rose delicate Atlantis trembled,  
Tilting upon the sea's plain like a leaf.  
The passionless air hung heavy on Atlantis,  
And the inclined spears of the flowering bushes  
Smoothly dropped down their loosened, threaded blossoms,  
Softening the pathways.

For tideless night had covered her, and sealed  
All scent within the narrow throat of flowers,  
And sound within the navel of the hills,  
And stars in the confusion of the air.

Within her darkness and unconsciousness  
She hid all beauty, and her silences

Sounds' measures and sequences,  
 And the black earth quickened  
 With oppression of blossom.  
 Ah ! thief that swims by night—Leviathan,  
 Rolled blindly in the wave's trough like a rotting thing,  
 Come to Atlantis' further edge by dark,  
 Poised over her quietness ;  
 Measureless drunkard of the bitter sea,  
 Insatiate—like some slow stain  
 Creeping on pleasure's face  
 —Like sudden misery.  
 For you have built yourself a house, and heaped  
 Dried foam, and scurf and ruin of the waves,  
 And crudded thoughts and shapes hardly conceived,  
 —Thief, boaster.  
 So foul, so desolate,  
 That you are crept to seek new life  
 —Have crossed the water's plain  
 Desiring and by stealth to gain  
 For rankness, foolishness and half-conceived beauty  
 Some perfect shape—an Atlantean body.

## II.

A music met Leviathan returning  
 While the still troubled waters of his passage  
 Danct every island like a lily head ;  
 Through all the shadowed throats of the wide forest,  
 His unnumbered monster children rode to greet him  
 On horses winged and dappled over like flowers.  
 Now huddled waves had lulled their bursting foam,  
 And slight clouds laid their breasts upon the sea ;  
 The sullen winds head downward from the sky  
 Solicited his movement on their viols.  
 And the palm trees, heat weary,  
 Chafing smooth limbs within a rinded shell,  
 Spoke of his coming with faint acclamation,  
 Like watchers long grown tired, languid and sorry ;  
 " Look, how he comes "—as soft as whispering deer—  
 " What storm and state he brings." Then louder voices ;  
 The unchaste turtles crying out for pleasure,



## THE CALENDAR

And badgers from the earth  
Sprawled upon the rocks with animal laughter.  
"The Cretan bull ferrying across the sea  
Did not bear richer load ;  
In the reed forest of Eurotas' bank  
That quivering swan, clapping strong wings together,  
With harsh, sweet voice called out no keener marriage."  
Then shrill response, as seeming from the air,  
Invoking joy, summoning desire.  
"Hither desires,  
Coming as thick and hot as the press and hurry of blood,  
Striking the apse of the brain,  
Ranging abroad, carrying your torches high,  
Running as light and remote as a scattered cast of pearls."  
Then antic spirits from the tulip trees ;  
"We must have tumblers like a wheel of fire ;  
We must have dancers moving their suave hands ;  
The tumblers strung backward like a hoop  
Till they thrust vermilion cheeks between their knees ;  
And the intricacy  
Of sweet involving gaiety,  
And wine to warm our innocence,  
Music to smooth the prickled sense,  
Sounding like water or like ringing glass."

The mitred Queen of Heaven stirred on her broad, low throne,  
Setting the lattice just so much ajar  
That wandering airs from earth should cool the room ;  
Peered down on more-than-Leda and smoothed her wrinkled  
snood,  
Crying to her Father-Spouse,—“Dear Lord, how sweet she  
looks.”  
The clumsy hierarchies,  
Wearied by their continual task of praise,  
Rested wide heifer eyes upon her fallen lids.  
Islanded in stars,  
Even the keen Intelligences turned away  
From the mathematic splendour of the spheres' incessant  
rolling chime.  
Himself The Father moved,

Traditional and vast,  
Remembering fresher years,  
Might have inclined his steeply pinnacled head.  
But his more zealous son,  
As neat as Thammuz, with smooth, pallid cheeks,  
Sensing an evil shut the casement fast.

But I, remembering Atlantis, wept;  
Remembering her paths and their unswept flowers,  
Clean beaches patterned by a light sea wrack,  
And the ruined halcyon nests that came on shore.  
Tears, in their freedom, cloud the eyes,  
Drowsing the sense;  
Honey and poppy equally mixed together  
They cannot drug away or curtain off with sleep  
So many crowding faces,  
Such pitiless disharmony of shapes.  
Upon Atlantis' plain I walked too long,  
As one on a broad stairway hesitant:  
"On this hand then to the small arrased room  
Or upward climb to the smooth dancing-floor?"  
My pleasures flowed harmonious as water—  
As flowing water left so little trace.

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## The Flight into Egypt

### *The Guiding Angel to Mary,*

Within Heaven's circle I had not guessed at this,  
I had not guessed at pleasure such as this,  
So sharp a pleasure,  
That like a lamp burning in foggy night  
Makes its own orb and sphere of flowing gold  
And tents itself in light.  
Going before you now how many days,  
Thoughts—all turned back like birds against the wind—  
Wheeled sullenly toward my Father's house,  
Considered his blind presence and the gathered bustling pæan,  
The affluence of his *sweetness*, his *grace*, and unageing *might*.  
My flesh glowed then in the shadow of a loose cloak

## THE CALENDAR

And my brightness troubled the ground with every pulse of  
the blood,  
My wings lax on the air, my eyes open and grave,  
With the vacant pride of hardly less than a God.  
We passed thickets that pricked with hidden deer,  
And wide shallows dividing before my feet,  
Empty plains threaded and between stiff aloes  
I took the asses' bridle to climb into mountain pathways.  
When cold bit you, through your peasant's mantle,  
And my Father filled the air with meaningless stars,  
I brought dung and dead white grass for fuel,  
Blowing a fire with the breath of the holy word.  
Your drudge, Joseph, slept ; you would sit unmoving,  
In marble quiet, or by the unbroken voice of a river,  
Would sometimes bare your maiden breast to his mouth,  
The suckling, to the conscious God balanced upon your knees.  
Apart I considered the melodious names of my brothers,  
As again in my Father's house, and the even spheres  
Slowly, nightlong recalled the splendour of numbers ;  
I heard again the voluptuous measure of praise.  
Sometimes pacing beneath clarity immeasurable  
I saw my mind lie open and desert,  
The wavering streams frozen up and each coppice quieted,  
A whole valley in starlight with leaves and waters.  
Coming at last to these farthest Syrian hills,  
Attis or Adon, some ambushed lust looked out ;  
My skin grows pale and smooth, shrunken as silk,  
Without the rough effulgence of a God.  
And here no voice has spoken ;  
There is no shrine of any Godhead here ;  
No grove or hallowed fires,  
And Godhead seems asleep.  
Only the vine has woven  
Strange houses and blind rooms and palaces,  
Into each hollow and crevice continually  
Dropped year-long irrecoverable flowers.  
The sprawling vine has built us a close room ;  
Obedient Hymen fills the air with mist ;  
And to make dumb our theft,  
The white and moving sand that will not bear a print.



# Byron : Marginalia.

BY DESMOND MACCARTHY.

[As the title indicates, these are detached notes. I have endeavoured to arrange them in such an order that the change of subject may not be more abrupt than is inevitable.]

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

Byron's Centenary produced three books of value ; Mr. Harold Nicolson's *Byron : The Last Journey*, Sir John Fox's *The Byron Mystery*, and Professor Chew's *Byron in England* ; the first is an admirable narrative, the second in thoroughness and arrangement resembles a report of a Royal Commission, the third is a most valuable book of reference, indispensable henceforth ; for from it you can discover how Byron's successive works struck his contemporaries, and it contains brief accounts of almost every English book which has been written about him. Professor Chew is impartial except when "The Astarte Question" crops up, when he apparently ceases to weigh evidence. This makes him unfair to Miss Mayne's *Life of Byron*. The Centenary produced no long treatise on Byron's poetry—a sign that much more interest is taken in Byron himself than in his poetry. The late Professor Kerr, Professor Grierson and Professor Garrod each gave a lecture containing admirable criticism. Professor Elton's chapter on Byron in *A Survey of English Literature* (published some years ago) was very good, but Mr. Arthur Symonds's beautiful and masterly essay on him in *The Romantic Movement* (Constable, 1909) remains the best criticism of Byron's poetry. The Centenary critics all tell us that we underrate it. They say Byron must be judged in the bulk. At the same time they admit that the great mass of his poetry is poor poetry. These statements do not necessarily cancel each other out, but if both are true, it is unlikely that this generation will read him thoroughly enough to change its estimate. We are more likely, in that case, to admit with a shrug that it may be true we underrate him, and leave it at that. Posterity, however, may not.

## ÆSTHETIC FASHIONS.

There are fashions in poetry. These fashions are strong modes of feeling, and it is impossible for the sensibility of the modern reader not to be coloured by them, unless (always possible) he confines his reading to past periods. The leading fashion in poetry is now tolerant of obscurity to a degree exceeding the seventeenth century, and contemptuous of plain, invigorating rhetoric in verse. It is mannered and subtle in the expression of emotion. A dread of the commonplace and lack of faith in common ideas and moral values have driven modern poets upon idiosyncratic associations and subjective themes—upon a shiver of obscure disillusionment, *Hi ! Hi ! Hi ! les amants bizarres*, or upon an equally obscure and sudden mystic exaltation, meaningless to the poet himself in any philosophic sense, or upon an odd collocation of images, suggesting a wonder-world. It will pass. It may return ; and if the present generation throws up in this mode of sensibility a poet as indubitable as Donne, some future generation may rediscover them as they themselves have rediscovered “the metaphysical poets.” But the taste for oratorical poetry, for the poetry of sentiment, for the poetry written in relief of feelings and to transmit as much emotion as possible, is also bound to return. Then it will not be so hard to read and judge Byron in the mass.

So, we'll go no more a roving  
 So late into the night,  
 Though the heart be still as loving,  
 And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,  
 And the soul wears out the breast,  
 And the heart must pause to breathe,  
 And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,  
 And the day returns too soon,  
 Yet we'll go no more a roving  
 By the light of the moon.

It is possible these verses may mean more to mankind (including poets) over a long period of time than most of the best modern

love-poems, though they sound now in contemporary ears like a sentimental drawing-room ballad. Is that a test of great poetry? It does not seem a conclusive one. Which tests are conclusive? I do not know. It is certainly one test, for we judge poetry by comparing it with poetry which has been remembered, or at least we check and corroborate our judgments by that comparison.

\* \* \*

Their praise is hymn'd by loftier harps than mine :  
 Yet one I would select from that proud throng,  
 Partly because they blend me with his line,  
 And partly that I did his sire some wrong,  
 And partly that bright names will hallow song ;  
 And his was of the bravest, and when shower'd  
 The death-bolts deadliest the thinn'd files along,  
 Even where the thickest of war's tempest lower'd,  
 They reach'd no nobler breast than thine, young, gallant  
 Howard !

There have been tears and breaking hearts for thee,  
 And mine were nothing, had I such to give ;  
 But when I stood beneath the fresh green tree,  
 Which living waves where thou didst cease to live,  
 And saw around me the wide field revive  
 With fruits and fertile promise, and the Spring  
 Came forth her work of gladness to contrive,  
 With all her reckless birds upon the wing,  
 I turn'd from all she brought to those she could not bring.

That is a noble valediction. It matters little that the diction is worn and stereotyped : "loftier harp," "breaking hearts," "sire," "reckless birds." This unself-conscious docility in the use of conventional phrases seems an integral part of its dignity and universality. The poet's references to himself are becoming here because they are candid, brief, direct. It is not necessary, in order to understand them, to know that the wrong Byron did "Howard's sire" was to refer to that nobleman's poems as "the paralytic pulings of Carlyle." The mood is not one of grief, but of the recognition of sorrow :

There have been tears and breaking hearts for thee,  
 And mine were nothing, had I such to give.



All can feel the poignancy of youthful death and Spring in juxtaposition, and it is out of poignant juxtapositions, sad, gay, or exciting poetry springs. Here, as always, Byron feels and expresses what the ordinary man can feel :

“ I turned from all she brought to those she could not bring.”

It is poignantly intelligible and will remain so, however men's thoughts change about death in battle or mortality. But is it poetry ? Who knows what poetry is ? Is *odi et amo et excrucior* poetry ? Is, “ To be or not to be ” ? Is “ After life's fitful fever he sleeps well ” poetry ? If so, is it only the four *f*'s which make it so ? Coleridge thought the couplets of Pope were not poetry ; they are certainly not prose. All we know is that men have treasured words which, in expressing thoughts and emotions, remove them from the surrounding pettiness of life. Most often this is accomplished through some subtle music in the words themselves ; but sometimes it seems to be achieved by mere finality in expression, thanks to which emotions have been transmuted into ideas ; sometimes a diction consecrated and unfamiliar has been an essential aid. There are different kinds of poetry ; the poetry of incantation, of bare statement and of august eloquence, and others for which we might find names. One thing is certain, however, that poetry was made for man and not man for a particular kind of poetry. High priests of the Muse may be forgiven for thinking otherwise, but such a blunder is excusable in them only.

## THE COLISEUM.

Byron was the most obvious of poets. Confronted by sea, mountains, storms, he reflected upon the helplessness of man ; before tombs, on the vanity of ambition ; among ruins, that Cities and Empires pass away. It is a characteristic he shares with the great poets and the worst. It won for him once the compromising admiration of those who care not for poetry, and it still commands the loyalty of those who honour classical tradition.

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,  
In murmur'd pity, or loud-roar'd applause,

## BYRON

As man was slaughter'd by his fellow-man.  
And wherefore slaughter'd? wherefore, but because  
Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,  
And the imperial pleasure.—Wherefore not?  
What matters where we fall to fill the maws  
Of worms—on battle-plains or listed spot?  
Both are but theatres where the chief actors rot.

I see before me the Gladiator lie:  
He leans upon his hand—his manly brow  
Consents to death, but conquers agony,  
And his droop'd head sinks gradually low—  
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow  
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,  
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now  
The arena swims around him—he is gone,  
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who  
won.

He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes  
Were with his heart, and that was far away;  
He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,  
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,  
*There* were his young barbarians all at play,  
*There* was their Dacian mother—he, their sire,  
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday—  
All this rush'd with his blood—Shall he expire  
And unavenged?—Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!

A famous passage, but I doubt if it is really familiar, though it may seem so, to many readers of this magazine. Read, perhaps, in childhood, it has never been forgotten, while afterwards half-mocking quotation has made it hard to listen to it with fresh susceptibility. But if you read it now, a new poem here, on this page, what would you think of it? Certainly you would not forget it. You would feel it was a long time since a living poet had addressed you with such directness; no reflection here upon reflection, nothing here between you and a clear-cut vision of life, a vision, too, requiring from you no special mood for its appreciation, no preparatory sensitizing of the mind, and carrying with it a massive, simple emotion

which, though undoubtedly touched by theatricality, might make you wonder how long you had been persuaded that poetry must be a matter of semi-tones of feeling. The passage shows Byron's strength and his weakness. He begins with a commonplace reflection such as occurs to anyone standing in the Coliseum, surrounded by those ruined tiers of empty seats, and, indeed, had that not been his first emotional response the poet might as well have been elsewhere. He then launches out in an untidy, emphatic piece of declamation : brutal as the gladiatorial shows were, there is no call for special indignation, since the whole world is a blood-stained arena. He says this because he knows it is violent and thinks it is fine. But clearly it is not felt. For not only does the poem end with a shout of indignation, but his sympathy with the dying gladiator grows so absorbing that the other gladiator, surely as innocent as he, becomes "the wretch who won"! This narrowness of emotional focus is characteristic of Byron ; so also is this pretence of regarding indifferently what moves him, from the height of philosophic despair. It is in his response to the thing itself he is magnificent. Examine the diction ; small wonder Arnold, with his faith in the classic quality of strong simplicity, thought Byron must survive :

Consents to death, but conquers agony.

He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes

Were with his heart, and that was far away.

At one phrase the fastidious might hitch, "his manly brow." Its central significance is perfectly right here, only in use that adjective has acquired accidental bluff-sentimental associations. Byron was insensitive to such surface refractions from words ; he sometimes used words inaccurately, for he was hasty and no scholar, but it was always the definite core of meaning he fastened upon, using words, in his lofty style, as it were, stark from the dictionary. This is why, when he talks in verse (*Beppo*, *Don Juan*), his diction is so much surer. Then, he caught words with all their living inflections from the lips of men. His mind was really too matter-of-fact and impetuous to handle that treacherous instrument, poetic diction. This naturally escapes the foreigner, who would see only a fine suggestion in a phrase like "manly brow." (I



am told there is often to a fastidious Frenchman a distressing commonness in the diction of Musset, which certainly escapes me.) Nor can a foreigner appreciate the full horror of what we mean when we say that no poet of equal rank, or anywhere near it, ever had so bad an ear as Byron. These two facts go far to explaining the enormous difference which exists between his reputation at home and abroad. Abroad they feel the energy and animated movement of his verse, the massiveness of his emotional power, the largeness of his conceptions, without being conscious of any of the accompanying drawbacks. No doubt his being one of the few English poets for whom the Continent had a real existence has also had something to do with it. Foreigners have taken far more seriously his abuse of England than Byron did himself.

#### SWINBURNE AND BYRON.

In 1865 Swinburne wrote a preface to a selection he made from Byron's work. In that preface he asserted that he can only be judged or appreciated in the mass, an assertion which nearly all critics have repeated since. "The greatest of his works was his whole work taken together; and to know or to honour him aright he must be considered with all his imperfections and with all his glories on his head." "The time has passed," he says, "when all the boys and girls who paddled in rhyme and dabbled in sentiment were wont to adore him with foolish faces of praise. It is of little moment to him or to us that they have long ceased to cackle and begun to hiss. They have become used to better verse and carefuller workmen; and must be forgiven if, after such training, they cannot at once appreciate the splendid and imperishable excellence which covers all his offences and outweighs all his defects: the excellence of sincerity and strength. Without these no poet can live; but few have ever had so much of them as Byron. His sincerity is indeed difficult to discover and define; but it does in effect lie at the root of all his good works: deformed by pretension and defaced by assumption, masked by folly and veiled by affectation; but perceptible after all, and priceless." In 1881 Matthew Arnold, in the preface to a selection from Byron, quoted with admiration this passage, but urged in his own criticism by "some power not

ourselves which makes " for paradox, he proceeded to exalt Byron above such poets as Coleridge, Keats and Shelley, placing him on a double throne above the poets of the nineteenth century with Wordsworth at his side. This essay enraged Swinburne, and in the most amusing critical tirade he ever wrote (*Under the Microscope* not excepted) Swinburne hurled himself upon Arnold and Byron. His *Wordsworth and Byron* contains, however, one sentence which, like that just quoted, anticipated, if it did not determine, the modern estimate of Byron. Swinburne asserts that Byron only discovered himself in *Don Juan*, *Beppo*, *The Vision of Judgment* : "Byron was supreme in his turn—a king by truly divine right ; but in a province outside the proper domain of absolute poetry. His is undisputed suzerain of the debateable border-land to which Berni has given his name : the style called Bernesque might now be more properly called Byronic, after the great master who seized and held it by the right of a stronger hand. If to be great as a Bernesque writer is to be great as a poet, then was Byron assuredly a great poet ; if it be not, then most assuredly he was nothing of the kind." When Byron wrote using "common words in their common places," when realism and satire were uppermost in his dual nature, he rose, as in *Don Juan*, easily into poetry ; when he made poetry his direct aim, though for brief moments he might attain it, he soon fell into unimaginative literalness, disguised by vehement emphasis.

#### BYRON AS HIS OWN CRITIC.

No one can make out a case for Byron as a critic, though he certainly got the best of the controversy with Mr. Bowles. In criticism, as in everything else, he was a partisan fighter. He held that the age of the heroic couplet was the great age of English poetry, and that Pope was its acme ; he thought the romantic movement a mistake. He regarded the greater part of his own work—nearly all that part of it which had won him popularity—as decadent stuff, and though he had good reason to regard himself as the grand "Napoleon of the realms of rhyme," he was uneasy about the quality of his fame. His expressions of indifference to it, of boredom and exasperation with it, were certainly half sincere. He could not help writing

his Giaours, Corsairs, etc. : " But I have lived in far countries abroad," he says, " in the agitating world at home, which was not favourable to study or reflection, so that almost all I have written has been mere passion—passion, it is true, of different kinds, but always passion." He adds in apology, " But then, I did other things besides writing." His own work he compared to " lava whose eruption prevents earth-quake." " To withdraw *myself* from myself—oh, that cursed selfishness—has ever been my sole, my entire, my sincere motive in scribbling at all." He complains that even in that he has failed ; for his own private troubles run through everything he writes. All this shows that, though as a man he was as perplexed by his own character as those who knew him intimately usually were, he understood himself as an author very well. Once he compared himself to a tiger which attains its object at one bound, and if it missed, " goes growling back to its den." It would be impossible to find an apter comparison for his failure and success as a poet.



# The Princess (II).

By D. H. LAWRENCE.

The peculiar spell of anger carried the Princess on, almost unconscious, for an hour or so. And by this time she was beginning to climb pretty high. Her horse walked steadily all the time. They emerged on a bare slope, and the trail wound through frail aspen-stems. Here a wind swept, and some of the aspens were already bare. Others were fluttering their discs of pure, solid yellow leaves, so *nearly* like petals, while the slope ahead was one soft, glowing fleece of daffodil yellow; fleecy like a golden foxskin, and yellow as daffodils alive in the wind and the high mountain sun.

She paused and looked back. The near great slopes were mottled with gold and the dark hue of spruce, like some unsinged eagle, and the light lay gleaming upon them. Away through the gap of the canyon she could see the pale blue of the egg-like desert, with the crumpled dark crack of the Rio Grande Canyon. And far, far off, the blue mountains like a fence of angels on the horizon.

And she thought of her adventure. She was going on alone with Romero. But then she was very sure of herself, and Romero was not the kind of man to do anything to her against her will. This was her first thought. And she just had a fixed desire to go over the brim of the mountains, to look into the inner chaos of the Rockies. And she wanted to go with Romero, because he had some peculiar kinship with her; there was some peculiar link between the two of them. Miss Cummins anyhow would have been only a discordant note.

She rode on, and emerged at length in the lap of the summit. Beyond her was a great concave of stone and stark, dead-grey trees, where the mountain ended against the sky. But nearer was the dense black, bristling spruce, and at her feet was the lap of the summit, a flat little valley of sere grass and quiet-standing yellow aspens, the stream trickling like a thread across.

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It was a little valley or shell from which the stream was gently poured into the lower rocks and trees of the canyon. Around her was a fairy-like gentleness, the delicate, sere grass, the groves of delicate-stemmed aspens dropping their flakes of bright yellow. And the delicate, quick little stream threading through the wild, sere grass.

Here one might expect deer and fawns and wild things, as in a little paradise. Here she was to wait for Romero, and they were to have lunch.

She unfastened her saddle and pulled it to the ground with a crash, letting her horse wander with a long rope. How beautiful Tansy looked, sorrel, among the yellow leaves that lay like a patina on the sere ground. The Princess herself wore a fleecy sweater of a pale, sere buff, like the grass, and riding breeches of a pure orange-tawny colour. She felt quite in the picture.

From her saddle pouches she took the packages of lunch, spread a little cloth, and sat to wait for Romero. Then she made a little fire. Then she ate a devilled egg. Then she ran after Tansy, who was straying across-stream. Then she sat in the sun, in the stillness near the aspens, and waited.

The sky was blue. Her little alp was soft and delicate as fairy-land. But beyond and up jutted the great slopes, dark with the pointed feathers of spruce, bristling with grey dead trees among grey rock, or dappled with dark and gold. The beautiful, but fierce, heavy, cruel mountains, with their moments of tenderness.

She saw Tansy start, and begin to run. Two ghost-like figures on horseback emerged from the black of the spruce across the stream. It was two Indians on horseback, swathed like seated mummies in their pale-grey cotton blankets. Their guns jutted beyond the saddles. They rode straight towards her, to her thread of smoke.

As they came near, they unswathed themselves and greeted her, looking at her curiously from their dark eyes. Their black hair was somewhat untidy, the long rolled plaits on their shoulders were soiled. They looked tired.

They got down from their horses near her little fire—a camp was a camp—swathed their blankets round their hips, pulled the saddles from their ponies and turned them loose, then sat

down. One was a young Indian whom she had met before, the other was an older man.

"You all alone?" said the younger man.

"Romero will be here in a minute," she said, glancing back along the trail.

"Ah, Romero! You with him? Where are you going?"

"Round the ridge," she said. "Where are you going?"

"We going down to Pueblo."

"Been out hunting? How long have you been out?"

"Yes. Been out five days." The young Indian gave a little meaningless laugh.

"Got anything?"

"No. We see tracks of two deer—but not got nothing."

The Princess noticed a suspicious looking bulk under one of the saddles—surely a folded-up deer. But she said nothing.

"You must have been cold," she said.

"Yes, very cold in the night. And hungry. Got nothing to eat since yesterday. Eat it all up." And again he laughed his little meaningless laugh. Under their dark skins, the two men looked peaked and hungry. The Princess rummaged for food among the saddle-bags. There was a lump of bacon—the regular stand-back—and some bread. She gave them this, and they began toasting slices of it on long sticks at the fire. Such was the little camp Romero saw as he rode down the slope: the Princess in her orange breeches, her head tied in a blue-and-brown silk kerchief, sitting opposite the two dark-headed Indians across the camp-fire, while one of the Indians was leaning forward toasting bacon, his two plaits of braid-swathed hair dangling as if wearily.

Romero rode up, his face expressionless. The Indians greeted him in Spanish. He unsaddled his horse, took food from the bags, and sat down at the camp to eat. The Princess went to the stream for water, and to wash her hands.

"Got coffee?" asked the Indians.

"No coffee this outfit," said Romero.

They lingered an hour or more in the warm midday sun. Then Romero saddled the horses. The Indians still squatted by the fire. Romero and the Princess rode away, calling *Adios!* to the Indians, over the stream and into the dense spruce whence the two strange figures had emerged.



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When they were alone, Romero turned and looked at her curiously, in a way she could not understand, with such a hard glint in his eyes. And for the first time she wondered if she was rash.

"I hope you don't mind going alone with me," she said.

"If you want it," he replied.

They emerged at the foot of the great bare slope of rocky summit, where dead spruce-trees stood sparse and bristling like bristles on a grey dead hog. Romero said the Mexicans, twenty years back, had fired the mountains, to drive out the whites. This grey concave slope of summit was corpse-like.

The trail was almost invisible. Romero watched for the trees which the Forest Service had blazed. And they climbed the stark corpse slope, among dead spruce, fallen and ash-grey, into the wind. The wind came rushing from the west, up the funnel of the canyon, from the desert. And there was the desert, like a vast mirage tilting slowly upwards towards the west, immense and pallid, away beyond the funnel of the canyon. The Princess could hardly look.

For an hour their horses rushed the slope, hastening with a great working of the haunches upwards, and halting to breathe, scrambling again, and rowing their way up length by length, on the livid, slanting wall. While the wind blew like some vast machine.

After an hour they were working their way on the incline, no longer forcing straight up. All was grey and dead around them, the horses picked their way over the silver-grey corpses of the spruce. But they were near the top, near the ridge.

Even the horses made a rush for the last bit. They had worked round to a scrap of spruce forest near the very top. They hurried in, out of the huge, monstrous, mechanical wind, that whistled inhumanly and was palely cold. So, stepping through the dark screen of trees, they emerged over the crest.

In front now was nothing but mountains, ponderous, massive, down-sitting mountains, in a huge and intricate knot, empty of life or soul. Under the bristling black feathers of spruce nearby lay patches of white snow. The lifeless valleys were concaves of rock and spruce, the rounded summits and the hog-backed summits of grey rock crowded one behind the other like some monstrous herd in arrest.

It frightened the Princess, it was so inhuman. She had not thought it could be so inhuman, so, as it were, anti-life. And yet now one of her desires was fulfilled. She had seen it, the massive, gruesome, repellent core of the Rockies. She saw it there beneath her eyes, in its gigantic, heavy gruesomeness.

And she wanted to go back. At this moment she wanted to turn back. She had looked down into the intestinal knot of these mountains. She was frightened. She wanted to go back.

But Romero was riding on, on the lee side of the spruce forest, above the concaves of the inner mountains. He turned round to her and pointed at the slope with a dark hand.

"Here a miner has been trying for gold," he said. It was a grey, scratched-out heap near a hole—like a great badger hole. And it looked quite fresh.

"Quite lately?" said the Princess.

"No, long ago—twenty, thirty years." He had reined in his horse and was looking at the mountains. "Look!" he said. "There goes the Forest Service trail—along those ridges, on the top, way over there till it comes to Lucytown, where is the Government road. We go down there—no trail—see behind that mountain—you see the top, no trees, and some grass?"

His arm was lifted, his brown hand pointing, his dark eyes piercing into the distance, as he sat on his black horse twisting round to her. Strange and ominous, only the demon of himself, he seemed to her. She was dazed and a little sick, at that height, and she could not see any more. Only she saw an eagle turning in the air beyond, and the light from the west showed the pattern on him underneath.

"Shall I ever be able to go so far?" asked the Princess faintly, petulantly.

"Oh yes! All easy now. No more hard places."

They worked along the ridge, up and down, keeping on the lee side, the inner side, in the dark shadow. It was cold. Then the trail laddered up again, and they emerged on a narrow ridge-track, with the mountain slipping away enormously on either side. The Princess was afraid. For one moment she looked out, and saw the desert, the desert ridges, more desert, more blue ridges, shining pale and very vast, far below, vastly

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palely tilting to the western horizon. It was ethereal and terrifying in its gleaming, pale, half-burnished immensity, tilted at the west. She could not bear it. To the left was the ponderous, involved mass of mountains all kneeling heavily.

She closed her eyes and let her consciousness evaporate away. The mare followed the trail. So on and on, in the wind again.

They turned their backs to the wind, facing inwards to the mountains. She thought they had left the trail ; it was quite invisible.

"No," he said, lifting his hand and pointing. "Don't you see the blazed trees?"

And making an effort of consciousness, she was able to perceive on a pale-grey dead spruce stem the old marks where an axe had chipped a piece away. But with the height, the cold, the wind, her brain was numb.

They turned again and began to descend ; he told her they had left the trail. The horses slithered in the loose stones, picking their way downward. It was afternoon, the sun stood obtrusive and gleaming in the lower heavens—about four o'clock. The horses went steadily, slowly, but obstinately onwards. The air was getting colder. They were in among the lumpish peaks and steep concave valleys. She was barely conscious at all of Romero.

He dismounted and came to help her from her saddle. She tottered, but would not betray her feebleness.

"We must slide down here," he said. "I can lead the horses."

They were on a ridge, and facing a steep bare slope of pallid, tawny mountain grass on which the western sun shone full. It was steep and concave. The Princess felt she might start slipping, and go down like a toboggan into the great hollow.

But she pulled herself together. Her eye blazed up again with excitement and determination. A wind rushed past her ; she could hear the shriek of spruce trees far below. Bright spots came on her cheeks as her hair blew across. She looked a wild, fairy-like little thing.

"No," she said. "I will take my horse."

"Then mind she doesn't slip down on top of you," said Romero. And away he went, nimbly dropping down the pale,



steep incline, making from rock to rock, down the grass, and following any little slanting groove. His horse hopped and slithered after him, and sometimes stopped dead, with forefeet pressed back, refusing to go further. He, below his horse, looked up and pulled the reins gently, and encouraged the creature. Then the horse once more dropped his forefeet with a jerk, and the descent continued.

The Princess set off in blind, reckless pursuit, tottering and yet nimble. And Romero, looking constantly back to see how she was faring, saw her fluttering down like some queer little bird, her orange breeches twinkling like the legs of some duck, and her head, tied in the blue and buff kerchief, bound round and round like the head of some blue-topped bird. The sorrel mare rocked and slipped behind her. But down came the Princess in a reckless intensity, a tiny, vivid spot on the great hollow flank of the tawny mountain. So tiny! Tiny as a frail bird's egg. It made Romero's mind go blank with wonder.

But they had to get down, out of that cold and dragging wind. The spruce trees stood below, where a tiny stream emerged in stones. Away plunged Romero, zigzagging down. And away behind, up the slope, fluttered the tiny, bright-coloured Princess, holding the end of the long reins, and leading the lumbering, four-footed, sliding mare.

At last they were down. Romero sat in the sun, below the wind, beside some squaw-berry bushes. The Princess came near, the colour flaming in her cheeks, her eyes dark blue, much darker than the kerchief on her head, and glowing unnaturally.

"We make it," said Romero.

"Yes," said the Princess, dropping the reins and subsiding on to the grass, unable to speak, unable to think.

But, thank heaven, they were out of the wind and in the sun.

In a few minutes her consciousness and her control began to come back. She drank a little water. Romero was attending to the saddles. Then they set off again, leading the horses still a little further down the tiny stream-bed. Then they could mount.

They rode down a bank and into a valley grove dense with aspens. Winding through the thin, crowding, pale-smooth stems, the sun shone flickering beyond them, and the disc-like aspen leaves, waving queer mechanical signals, seemed to be

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splashing the gold light before her eyes. She rode on in a splashing dazzle of gold.

Then they entered shadow and the dark, resinous spruce trees. The fierce boughs always wanted to sweep her off her horse. She had to twist and squirm past.

But there was a semblance of an old trail. And all at once they emerged in the sun on the edge of the spruce-grove, and there was a little cabin, and the bottom of a small, naked valley with grey rock and heaps of stones, and a round pool of intense green water, dark green. The sun was just about to leave it. Indeed, as she stood, the shadow came over the cabin and over herself ; they were in the lower gloom, a twilight. Above, the heights still blazed.

It was a little hole of a cabin, near the spruce trees, with an earthen floor and an unhinged door. There was a wooden bed-bunk, three old sawn-off log-lengths to sit on as stools, and a sort of fireplace ; no room for anything else. The little hole would hardly contain two people. The roof had gone—but Romero had laid on thick spruce-boughs.

The strange squalor of the primitive forest pervaded the place, the squalor of animals and their droppings, the squalor of the wild. The Princess knew the peculiar repulsiveness of it. She was tired and faint.

Romero hastily got a handful of twigs, set a little fire going in the stove grate, and went out to attend to the horses. The Princess vaguely, mechanically, put sticks on the fire, in a sort of stupor, watching the blaze, stupefied and fascinated. She could not make much fire—it would set the whole cabin alight. And smoke oozed out of the dilapidated mud-and-stone chimney.

When Romero came in with the saddle-pouches and saddles, hanging the saddles on the wall, there sat the little Princess on her stump of wood in front of the dilapidated fire-grate, warming her tiny hands at the blaze, while her orange breeches glowed almost like another fire. She was in a sort of stupor

“ You have some whisky now, or some tea ? Or wait for some soup ? ” he asked.

She rose and looked at him with bright, dazed eyes, half comprehending ; the colour glowing hectic in her cheeks.

"Some tea," she said, "with a little whisky in it. Where's the kettle?"

"Wait," he said, "I'll bring the things."

She took her cloak from the back of her saddle, and followed him into the open. It was a deep cup of shadow. But above the sky was still shining, and the heights of the mountains were blazing with aspen like fire blazing.

Their horses were cropping the grass among the stones. Romero clambered up a heap of grey stones and began lifting away logs and rocks, till he had opened the mouth of one of the miner's little old workings. This was his cache. He brought out bundles of blankets, pans for cooking, a little petrol camp-stove, an axe, the regular camp outfit. He seemed so quick and energetic and full of force. This quick force dismayed the Princess a little.

She took a saucepan and went down the stones to the water. It was very still and mysterious, and of a deep green colour, yet pure, transparent as glass. How cold the place was! How mysterious and fearful.

She crouched in her dark cloak by the water, rinsing the saucepan, feeling the cold heavy above her, the shadow like a vast weight upon her, bowing her down. The sun was leaving the mountain tops, departing, leaving her under profound shadow. Soon it would crush her down completely.

Sparks?—or eyes looking at her across the water? She gazed, hypnotised. And with her sharp eyes she made out in the dusk the pale form of a bob-cat crouching by the water's edge, pale as the stones among which it crouched, opposite. And it was watching her with cold, electric eyes of strange intentness, a sort of cold, icy wonder and fearlessness. She saw its *museau* pushed forward, its tufted ears pricking intensely up. It was watching her with cold, animal curiosity, something demonish and conscienceless.

She made a swift movement, spilling her water. And in a flash the creature was gone, leaping like a cat that is escaping; but strange and soft in its motion, with its little bob-tail. Rather fascinating. Yet that cold, intent, demonish watching! She shivered with cold and fear. She knew well enough the dread and repulsiveness of the wild.

Romero carried in the bundles of bedding and the camp



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outfit. The windowless cabin was already dark inside. He lit a lantern, and then went out again with the axe. She heard him chopping wood as she fed sticks to the fire under her water. When he came in with an armful of oak-scrub faggots, she had just thrown the tea into the water.

"Sit down," she said, "and drink tea."

He poured a little bootleg whiskey into the enamel cups, and in the silence the two sat on the log-ends, sipping the hot liquid and coughing occasionally from the smoke.

"We burn these oak sticks," he said. "They don't make hardly any smoke."

Curious and remote he was, saying nothing except what had to be said. And she, for her part, was as remote from him. They seemed far, far apart, worlds apart, now they were so near.

He unwrapped one bundle of bedding, and spread the blankets and the sheepskin in the wooden bunk.

"You lie down and rest," he said, "and I make the supper."

She decided to do so. Wrapping her cloak round her, she lay down in the bunk, turning her face to the wall. She could hear him preparing supper over the little petrol stove. Soon she could smell the soup he was heating; and soon she heard the hissing of fried chicken in a pan.

"You eat your supper now?" he said.

With a jerky, despairing movement, she sat up in the bunk, tossing back her hair. She felt cornered.

"Give it me here," she said.

He handed her first the cupful of soup. She sat among the blankets, eating it slowly. She was hungry. Then he gave her an enamel plate with pieces of fried chicken and currant jelly, butter and bread. It was very good. As they ate the chicken he made the coffee. She said never a word. A certain resentment filled her. She was cornered.

When supper was over he washed the dishes, dried them, and put everything away carefully, else there would have been no room to move in the hole of a cabin. The oak-wood gave out a good bright heat.

He stood for a few moments at a loss. Then he asked her:

"You want to go to bed soon?"

"Soon," she said. "Where are you going to sleep?"

"I make my bed here—" he pointed to the floor along the wall. "Too cold out of doors."

"Yes," she said, "I suppose it is."

She sat immobile, her cheeks hot, full of conflicting thoughts. And she watched him while he folded the blankets on the floor, a sheepskin underneath. Then she went out into the night.

The stars were big. Mars sat on the edge of a mountain, for all the world like the blazing eye of a crouching mountain lion. But she herself was deep, deep below in a pit of shadow. In the intense silence she seemed to hear the spruce forest crackling with electricity and cold. Strange, foreign stars floated on that unmoving water. The night was going to freeze. Over the hills came the far sobbing-singing howling of the coyotes. She wondered how the horses would be.

Shuddering a little, she turned to the cabin. Warm light showed through its chinks. She pushed at the rickety, half-opened door.

"What about the horses?" she said.

"My black, he won't go away. And your mare will stay with him.—You want to go to bed now?"

"I think I do."

"All right. I feed the horses some oats."

And he went out into the night.

He did not come back for some time. She was lying wrapped up tight in the bunk.

He blew out the lantern, and sat down on his bedding to take off his clothes. She lay with her back turned. And soon, in the silence, she was asleep.

She dreamed it was snowing, and the snow was falling on her through the roof, softly, softly, helplessly, and she was going to be buried alive. She was growing colder and colder, the snow was weighing down on her. The snow was going to absorb her.

*(To be concluded next month.)*

## Scrutinies

## (2) Walter de la Mare.

BY DOUGLAS GARMAN.

"HE was clearly the fruit of breeding-in . . . what the dear old evolutionists esteem a *sport* . . . and he had bats in his belfry . . . *extra-terrestrial* bats." In his hands, of course, the firm of Lispet, Lispett & Vaine went bankrupt, but he, Anthony, did not care. He sat alone in his decaying factory, planning a "kind of ludicrous doll's merchandise," content to follow the bidding of the Sylph who had been "evoked by a moment's aspiration and delight out of his own sublime wool-gatherings." Astutely, de la Mare does not present him isolated in his pathetic fatuity, but sets him off against a prosaic audience, the better to show where his own sympathies lie. To him Anthony is the true type of the imaginative mind, the visionary, the sublime. He has escaped completely from the matter-of-fact into the dream world of his own making. De la Mare has not been so successful: scantily he acknowledges the prosaic, though his most typical work is the reflection of a belief in his own emancipation.

From the beginning, de la Mare postulated two independent worlds, Anthony's and reality, not spontaneously, but from necessity born of a distaste for the one in which he found himself. This being the case, he turned to poetry for the *Open Sesame* which would admit him to the former, but his poetry fails because he lacks imagination, the oracle of all pass-words. Fancy, to accept Coleridge's distinction, he has in plenty, and in his essay on Rupert Brooke has written a defence of it. He splits the poetical imagination into two distinct types, "the one visionary, the other intellectual," but he only effects a distinction between the former and *fancy* when he says: "The visionaries . . . have to learn to substantiate their imaginings, to base their fantastic palaces on *terra firma*, to weave their dreams into the fabric of actuality." So he breaks down the contrast between the visionary and the



intellectual, for this substantiation of imaginings can only come about through "knowledge and experience"—means which he would appropriate solely to the use of the intellectual imagination. The means by which he would replace it, intuition or divination, are not the antitheses he suggests. They are the components of any imagination; the greater part, in fact, since it is they which enable the mind to fill out and give form to its experience.

In practice he has shown an increasing recognition of the importance of building on *terra firma*, if not in his verse at any rate in his tales. But by excluding from his work humanity, the passions and ethics, he has rashly limited the modes of perceiving beauty to a single factitious aspiration. To a great extent he has the power of inducing a belief in the "poetic state," nebulous and undefined, and the degree to which he is accepted as a poet depends on the susceptibility of the reader to this belief, for without it his poetic consciousness is a world of tinsel, based in no fundamental part of general consciousness. Once the validity of this thaumaturgic power is admitted, de la Mare becomes a magician; if we drink the fairy wine, "then us will *all* be changed into wild swans, Sally, and fly—fly away over the trees to the sea."

Now de la Mare has two ways of administering this wine. Either directly, by the power of words—imagery, metaphor, music—usually in verse; or indirectly, usually in prose. It is not without purpose that his stories are so often repeated or recollected, rather than told: an intermediary is necessary. Nor is it chance that these should be usually monkeys, old people, half-wits, deformities, unchildlike children or fairies, for otherwise they would not serve their purpose. Their abnormal vision prepares the transition of the reader's consciousness from the real to the unreal, and serves as a filter through which the stream of raw life may be strained.

At first the method was an ingenuous one. Mount your hero on Rosinante and let him loose in a dream-world peopled with the ghosts of fiction, romance or allegory, and he is unlikely to be over-troubled with the facts of existence. At the same time his adventures afford unbounded scope for the description of phantastic countrysides and for a flood of diluted, lifeless philosophising. But Mr. de la Mare was not

content to ride for ever behind Henry Brocken, or perhaps he just slipped off that emaciated rump on to the hard earth and was awoken. In any case he was undaunted. He set off on a trip with three monkeys—one of whom, of course possessed the Wonder-Stone—to discover Tishnar, that land of happiness from which death is banished. For children—and, ostensibly, the book was written for them—the journey is a success, since its end is attained; but for us, though it contains de la Mare's philosophy, it is a failure, since the appended description of Tishnar ends with the admission that, as everyone can see, he is only chattering about what he cannot understand.

After these two exotic experiences it would seem that the hand of reality began to tug more insistently at the magician's robe, for the action of the next novel takes place in a suburban town. The *timbre* of the book is also changed, losing to a certain extent "that peculiar little bell-peal in the voice which one simply cannot avoid when trying to placate infants, the ailing, and the aged." The approach to phenomena is at once more scientific and direct, and the intermediary is at least a man, albeit mentally deranged. But the bias of the book is still anti-human. The revenant is, by his insanity, endowed with the qualities which enable him to find his way unhampered into the world beyond; he is the fictitious link making unreality plausible. But here the falsity of values which he supports is not blatant while he is partaking of a ghostly life, it is only when he is in contact with his wife or her friends that the fundamental shallowness of the story is revealed. It is as though de la Mare had less faith in Tishnar, and were looking back over his shoulder at the existence from which he was fleeing. Yet, when for a moment he checks the panic of escape, he writes of a world filled with crude wax-works who take part uncouthly in a lifeless melodrama.

And so with ever more frequent backward glances he wrote the *Memoirs of a Midget*. It is a supreme *tour de force*, depending for its value on its characteristics of picturesqueness and pathos. Fanny Bowater alone lives: the other characters are the stock-in-trade of a very accomplished writer, lay figures used as the *décor* for an anæmic drama. The world is distorted by the peevish, debilitated vision of a freak, and the ingenuity

with which de la Mare sustains the illusion of two antagonistic modes of life is the measure of his talent. By her nature the Midget is debarred from vital experience, so that her emotional life can, without falsification, take place in a plane of emasculate feelings, remorse and self-pity. It required a great degree of skill to make this perverted relationship of a dwarf and a hunchback tragic, but de la Mare has almost succeeded by the subtle toning-down of emotional value and by presenting the specific limitations of the Midget as general. In all the material details of her existence there is meticulous exactitude, but, since she is psychologically normal, this allows her that very freedom from the body which makes credible de la Mare's postulation of an independent, fantastic world. This is exactly the same fiction as that on which rests his conception of children. They, he maintains, "live in a world peculiarly their own, so much so that it is doubtful if the adult can do more than very fleetingly reoccupy that far-away consciousness. . . . They are not bound in by their groping senses. . . . Between their dream and their reality looms no impassable abyss." This is an unequivocal but arbitrary assumption, based on a neglect of facts or failure to observe them. Yet it is demanded by his point of view. Without some such pretext the theory of an intrinsically poetic attitude would be impossible. In man the animal is too obvious to be denied: children and the abnormal, however, are more feasibly, though quite erroneously, assumed to be free from the taints of an unbroken process of evolution. Without bowels or sexual desire they are apt subjects of, or mediums for, de la Mare's poetic hypnosis.

All poetry is, of course, in a sense hypnotic, since it is its function to produce in the reader a state of mind, an attitude towards life, prescribed by the poet. Its value depends on the nature of this attitude and therefore on the technique by which alone it may be apprehended. So de la Mare's poetry, which forsakes humanity and this world for fairies and Araby, can only be of worth inasmuch as it is woven "into the fabric of reality." But we are like Thumb in *The Three Mulla-Mulgars*, we feel as he did towards Nod: "Have it as you will. It is easy to fear nothing and to see what is not here when you meddle with magic"; only we cannot admit the

potency of the magic. In the past poets had this magic at their disposal, whether as a pagan theogony or as Christianity, but for them there was no need to transmute it : it was reality. To Milton the divinity of Christ was a fact, and Satan was a mighty prince. In writing of them he was writing of a concept which was as actual a part of his consciousness as the mystery of vision or the fact of birth. But we have no such belief, and the poet who would substitute for it a factitious one, in magic or the æsthetic state, is essentially decadent.

And this decadence is at once noticeable in Mr. de la Mare's technique. Poetic differs from scientific expression in its ability to make use of qualities of language other than those which specifically belong to it, but these qualities may be exploited to the detriment of expression, as is the case with de la Mare. His extreme sensibility to the musical value of words often leads to an invertebrate style ; he sacrifices coherence to a meretricious effect. Such lines, for instance, as "*Upon a bank, easeless with knobs of gold,*" or "*Whereon a small and sanguine sun Floats in a mirror on,*" or "*His fangs like spears in him uprose,*" approximate to the effect he intends, but are almost nonsense. His use of inversion has the same result of weakening his meaning by flouting the intellect. "*O restless fingers—not that music make*" ; "*Small at the window looped cowed bat awing*" ; "*And there fell upon his sense . . . the faint shrill sweetness of the birds' throats, Their tent of leaves beneath.*"

Yet, since Mr. de la Mare is an accomplished technician, it would be mere carping to draw attention to the weaknesses of his style, were it not that they all point to an innate degeneracy. The use of archaisms—even such as are conventionally accepted as proper to poetic diction—inevitably destroys the virility of a language, and the coinage of words when not absolutely necessary is evidence of a writer's debility. They result in a windy rhetoric or a fantastic vagueness ; sometimes, as in *In the Dock*, in a melodramatic crudity. The characteristics of Mr. de la Mare's style are the characteristics of his mind—"obviously the fruit of breeding-in." His imagery is seldom drawn from direct sensuous experience, but is taken from books or the storehouse of pale reverie. This is very noticeable in his descriptions. The different



facets do not conspire together to give solidity because they are not chosen to satisfy a fundamental sensuous need, but are selected for their derivative or face-value.

The effect of his poems is to produce an atmosphere of romance, or mystery, or simulated childishness. This is the initial stage, corresponding to the intermediary in his prose tales, which tempers the reader's mind to a condition susceptible to de la Mare's point of view. Imagination requires no such preliminary process: it takes the incoherent experiences of life and, by giving them form, creates its own standard of values. Fancy cannot do this. It accepts its values, ready-made, from an extrinsic conception, and can only communicate them by an intermediary process. It results in the divorce of art from life, for the poetry which it dictates is incapable of creating a valid attitude to life and does not, therefore, fulfil its essential function.

# The Natural Pander : Leopold Bloom and Others.

By BERTRAM HIGGINS.

THROUGHOUT literature there runs a figure which makes an appeal different in kind from the rest of the literary creation by approaching an identity in its various manifestations. Gargantua, Sancho Panza, The Wife of Bath, Falstaff, Uncle Toby, Pickwick are outstanding examples of a unique confraternity whose birth cannot be explained by the artist's usual process of abstracting objects from the wave-like, subsuming action of experience, and disclosing their unpredictable individuality. When this process of abstraction is unduly simplified, as it is in the mediæval Morality plays, the apprehension of the characters by the audience is restricted to that same portion of the mind which was exerted by their authors. There some single quality of a character is developed to its utmost by the logic of imagination, but—except for certain passages where, inevitably, the genius proved too strong for the intention—this quality is stressed at such expense to the others that, as in a physical organism, the localised vitality sets up a malignant growth to which the whole succumbs. Extremism of simplification is a danger to which the writers of a classic tradition also are exposed : Molière's comedy of Types and Ben Jonson's comedy of Humours are, in plan, only one degree more complex than the spectacle of personified Virtues and Vices, and their superiority as creations is due solely to the poetic power which refined and particularised them in the course of composition, multiplying life in the hardly animate uni-cellular *dramatis personæ* of the original conception. The writers of what is called a romantic tradition are liable to the opposite set of temptations. Their altered vision peoples the world with new forms, and until the arrival of a mature spokesman they cultivate the variety of human nature to a point at which it is snapped off from connection with its roots.

"Hernani" was hissed at, with good reason, for its exaggeration and unreality; Byron's dramatic figures disintegrate when the support of his immediate sentiment is withdrawn; Balzac and Dickens, even, lavish so much attention on freaks that we suspect an uncertain principle of life behind their invention. Take, now, a great artist of a transitional period. Dostoevsky's rooted dissatisfaction with the conditions of his time, the reforming ambitions which were imposed upon him by a transitional environment, laid this embarrassment on his work, that, finding the actual world slow and unmanageable to his realisation of its needs, he was driven to project his entire scene into an atmosphere of prophecy, in which the spirit of the characters is always tending to break away from their flesh and Nature suspends action in a universal yearning towards futurity. It is Dostoevsky's tremendous artistic will that keeps his figures upright on this base of shifting sands.

The ordinary literary creation is as subtly influenced by such conditions as a human embryo is by the incidents of pregnancy. But the members of our unique confraternity—they might be nicknamed the Confraternity of Natural Panders—are sensitive only to the broad modifications which approximate them to the ideal of their tribe. An individual in literature, a Hamlet, is built up by a progression of related qualities which have no coherence outside his personality; a type, a Tartuffe, is maintained by the exclusion from his conduct of all traits save those which illustrate the moral idea that is his essence. The natural pander, on the other hand, neither progresses, like the individual, nor simplifies himself, like the type. He embodies something constant in human nature, and his embodiment is static. It would be dogmatic to assert that Falstaff disclosed himself in his fulness from the hour when he was born "with a white head and something a round belly" till the moment when they became "as cold as any stone," for Shakespeare, with right intuition, produces him middle-aged; but his reproach to the case-hardened young king, "Banish plump Jack, and banish *all the world*," impresses us like the word of an Old Testament prophet revealing his mission. What is the extra-personal attribute in Falstaff that establishes his identity with the other natural panders? It is his role of man purely vegetative and

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animal conserving the creation in which he is at home, and dispensing with the whole shadow-world of man ideal. "Can honour set to a leg? No: or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honour has no skill as surgery, then? No. What is honour? A word. What is that word honour? What is that honour? Air. A trim reckoning! . . . Honour is a mere scutcheon: and so ends my catechism."

They are our throw-backs, and we are their monsters. Our aspirations are checked or purified by contact with their vulgar good nature: so valid, indeed, is the test, that their creators use them as impersonal forces, as trustworthy instruments of renewal to be moved up into the slack portions of the play, narrative or poem. "Comic relief" is a true phrase, for laughter is the last resort both of invention and of criticism; its extraverting energy clears the ground for a resumption of the constructive or of the analytic attempt, where persistent earnestness would only thicken the mists. The formula of the natural panders is the Roman Catholic motto for Ash Wednesday, but with reversed bias: *Memento homo quia pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris*. Their service to us resembles that of the life-revivers in the ancient Dithyrambic Rites and May Festivals. The physical gestures of joy and suppliancy with which our ancestors greeted Spring have been transferred to the mind, and modern man gratifies the same impulses when, on the mental level, he turns to the cornucopia of comedy for renewal.

In our age a permanent addition has been made to the ranks of the natural panders in the person of Leopold Bloom, the part-hero of "Ulysses." Mr. Joyce has fashioned the two principal figures of his gigantic exposition in an antithetical form inherited from great writers of the past. The radical opposing concepts of philosophy, matter and mind, intellect and feeling, subject and object, have become flesh in some of the most deliberated works of art, for art realises what thought discovers, and the only act impossible to its nature is the Hegelian synthesis with which philosophy closes shop. Bloom and Stephen Dedalus are perhaps the most logically opposed pair that ever issued from this convention, if we except Sancho Panza and Quixote, who are the creations of a mind untroubled by the strife for new categories. Hazlitt says



of "Tristram Shandy" that Sterne "has contrived to oppose, with equal felicity and originality, two characters, one of pure intellect, and the other of pure good nature." Stephen and Bloom are cast into the same elementary mould as My Father and My Uncle Toby; but the differences in their relations are stressed by the dissimilarity of their authors' intentions. Sterne's predominating interest in the affective part of conduct caused him to drag Uncle Toby intermittently from his proper stand of natural pander to gain a sentimental triumph over My Father, and this wilful translation of a natural into a moral force unbalances the book. In "Ulysses," so unwavering is the construction, so disciplined the development, the protagonists are not once perverted from themselves in enslavement to a minor or cursory desire of their author's; the objective scheme is maintained with a pertinacity heroic in a work of such dimensions. Indeed, as we shall see later, Bloom and Stephen are not even allowed mutual comprehension; they pass and repass one another in their odysseys without establishing contact.

Bloom's status is made clear at his first introduction:

"Mr. Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls. He liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liver slices fried with crustcrumbs, fried hencods' roes. Most of all, he liked grilled mutton kidneys, which gave to his palate a fine tang of faintly-scented urine."

Savages believe that they annex the qualities of animals by eating them. The same instinct is shown in the natural panders, who invariably have a heavy meat diet; and we must remember that the god from whom their name derives won his hoofs by creative devolution. But Bloom is a pander with a difference: all the others are, in varying degrees, uninhibited agents who externalise their whole flow of energy; Bloom is a pander discomfited, like Pan, by the movement of the world away from a state in which his impulses were natural towards one in which it is necessary to repress, moderate, or sublimate them. He cannot even express his case against this alien dispensation in its own terms. The incidental fact that he is a Jew, whose *damnosa hereditas* is homelessness, adds nourishment to the real roots of his indignation:

"— And I belong to a race, too," says Bloom, "that is

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hated and persecuted. Also now. This very moment. This very instant.

Gob, he near burnt his fingers with the butt of his old cigar.

— Robbed, says he. Plundered. Insulted. Persecuted. Taking what belongs to us by right. At this very moment, says he, putting up his fist, sold by auction off in Morocco like slaves or cattle.

— Are you talking about the new Jerusalem? says the citizen.

— I'm talking about injustice, says Bloom. . . . And then he collapses all of a sudden, twisting round all the opposite, as limp as a wet rag.

— But it's no use, says he. Force, hatred, history, all that. That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows that it's the very opposite of that that is really life.

What? says Alf.

— Love, says Bloom. I mean the opposite of hatred. I must go now."

This is the explanation of the melancholy that suffuses the whole of his mental life, which Mr. Joyce present in minute detail and in a variety of style that shapes itself intricately round the tiny crises of his day's experience. It is a quality in Bloom which might have been exploited to effect a working sympathy between him and Stephen Dedalus. Bloom's melancholy is the outcome of his thwarted senses, and Stephen's personality is wrapped in a despair that arises from his foiled search for an abstract ideal. Or rather, from his failure to solve the conflict in his nature which keeps him back from self-fulfilment. The problem he detects in Shakespeare is his own: "his unremitting intellect is the hommad Iago ceaselessly willing that the Moor in him shall suffer." He is bound to the past by what psycho-analysts call an emotional fixation, for his speculative genius, while it flouts, is whirled in a circle round the Jesuitical God of his boyhood, and the victim of his most reckless attempt for liberation paralyses his later endeavours with remorse:

"Silently, in a dream, his mother had come to him after her death, her wasted body within its loose brown graveclothes giving off an odour of wax and rosewood,

her breath, that had been upon him, mute, reproachful, a faint odour of wetted ashes." v

But Bloom's paternal solicitude for Stephen in the brothel episode, and his doubly paternal attitude in the scene immediately subsequent (he sees in Stephen the man into whom his son Ruby might have grown, had he lived) are not so much as repulsed. Stephen's self-willed inhumanity as a social being seems to endow him with an angelic body which can hold no parley with the human substance; more truly, he is an intermediate being like the Virgil who guided and guarded Dante in supernatural territory. The only acquaintance who distracts his consciousness into forming a self-defensive concept is Buck Milligan, whose shrewd mocking peasant's mind follows him about like Lear's fool, annotating his thought with affection, pity and derision.

The fate that prevents Bloom and Stephen from pooling any part of their experience is evidenced in the first episodes of "Ulysses"—in which the two streams of consciousness are realized with a minimum of comment—and proved in the long cross-examination section near the end of the book. The superficial conclusiveness of the summaries here is a parody of law-court methods:

"Did Bloom discover common factors of similarity between their respective like and unlike reactions to experience?—Both were sensitive to artistic impressions, musical in preference to plastic or pictorial. Both preferred a Continental to an insular manner of life, a cisatlantic to a transatlantic place of residence. Both, indurated by early domestic training and an inherited tenacity of heterodox resistance, professed their disbelief in many orthodox, religious, national, social and ethical doctrines. Both admitted the alternately stimulating and obtunding influence of heterosexual magnetism."

The human mind is in a ceaseless state of becoming; with each new impression made by an image or an idea it is altered instantaneously and irretrievably, its combinations are reshuffled and the qualifying power of memory is swelled or sifted. Apart from his innovating greatness, as pure writer, in grafting on to prose a new vitalizing gland from poetry

(an artificial rejuvenation of which it is in periodic need), Mr. Joyce's method of recording the innermost activities of Bloom and Stephen is a highly original attempt to bring literary art into a more intimate relation with the time factor of mind-processes. On the novelistic side he has found a new angle of impartiality for the delineation of character by disclosing the thread of association on which the mind climbs to its quickly-falling climaxes, where his predecessors have restricted themselves, more or less, to a description and elaboration of the climaxes.

It is like an ordeal of water for Bloom and Stephen, a flooding of their minds to test the weight and volume of the contents. We see Bloom reacting almost exclusively to the practical incidents of his environment ; his selection of objects is like a scavenger's, an aggrandisement of oddments to gratify his stray desires. His perceptions are brought to a head, not by the intimation of a concept or feeling waiting to impose order, but by sudden sensuous memories. Here is a typical passage of his mind :

"Enough of this place. Brings you a bit nearer every time. Last time I was here it was Mrs. Simco's funeral. Poor papa too. The love that kills. And even scraping up the earth at night with a lantern like that case I read of to get at fresh buried females. . . . Gives you the creeps after a bit. I will appear to you after death. . . . Plenty to see and hear and feel yet. Feel live warm beings near you. Let them sleep in their maggoty beds. They are not going to get me this innings. Warm beds."

For Stephen, on the other hand, a thing perceived is like a note struck to suggest a whole symphony of words and ideas, and during the improvisation he resents any further intrusion by the external world :

"She trudges, schlepps, trains, drags, trascines her load. A tide, westering, moondrawn, in her wake. Tides, myriadislanded, within her, blood not mine, *oinopa ponton*, a winedark sea. Behold the handmaid of the moon. In sleep the wet sign calls her hour, bids her rise. Bridebed, childbed, bed of death, ghostcandled. *Omnis caro ad te veniet*. He comes, pale vampire, through storm his eyes, his bat sails bloodying the sea" . . .



The effect of this form of presentation in a prolonged reading is a gradual hypnosis of those faculties which impede the action of (in Ruskin's phrase) "imagination penetrative." The reader's attention is so taken up with the minute parts in which the subject is presented, in order that it may be reconstructed with the minimum of official dogma, that the moment of inactive contemplation, the crisis of aesthetic experience, is in danger of fatal postponement. Whether for this reason or another, Mr. Joyce, while carrying through the experiment, falls back on his technical virtuosity to preserve Bloom and Dedalus from dissolution within the mass of their experience. But for this saving device Bloom would probably have floundered from extension of bulk, and Stephen have been lost to humanity in the essential state to which his consuming daemon refines him.

# The Big Drum.

BY WILLIAM GERHARDI

THE brass band played *Im Köpfle zwei Äugle*, and it seemed to her that the souls of these men were like notes of this music, crying for something elusive, for something in vain. To blare forth one's love on a brass trumpet! An earnest of one's high endeavour fallen short through the inadequate matter of brass; but withal in these abortive notes one felt the presence of the heights the instrument would reach, alas, if it but could!

It touched her to the heart. She would have liked her Otto to play the trumpet instead of the big drum. It seemed more romantic. Otto was not a bit romantic. He was a soldier all right, but he looked more like a man who had started life as a shoemaker's apprentice, had grown old, and was still a shoemaker's apprentice. The band played well—a compact synthetic body—but Otto was a forlorn figure who watched the proceedings with sustained and patient interest and was suffered by them, every now and then, to raise his drumstick and to give a solitary, judicious “Bang!” And he—a tall gaunt man—seemed as though he were ashamed of his small part. And as she watched him she felt a pang of pity for herself: wedded to him, she would be forgotten, while life, indifferent, strode by; and no one in the world would care whether she had her share of happiness before she died. And the music brought this out acutely, as if along the hard stone-paved indifference of life it dragged, dragged on excruciatingly its living bleeding soul. It spoke of loneliness, of laughter, of the pathos, pity and futility of life.

She watched them. The bayonets at their side. The military badges of rank. The hard discipline. And the music seemed to say, “Stop! What are you doing? Why are you doing this?” And thoughts flowed into her mind. Of soldiers dreaming on a Sunday afternoon. A fierce old corporal of whom everyone was afraid talking to her of children

and of daisies. Soldiers who, too, had dreams in long waves—of what? she did not know—but not this. And the men who stood up and blew the brass trumpets seemed to say, and the shining trumpets themselves seemed to say: “We were not born for the Army; we were born for something better—though Heaven only knows what it is!”

That was so. Undeniably so. Yet she wished it were otherwise. It helped to make allowances for Otto. Whatever else he lacked, it made her think at least he had a soul. But to be wedded for life to the big drum! She did not fancy the idea. It didn’t seem a proper career. But Otto showed no sign of *wanting* to “gei on”—even in the orchestra. The most exasperating thing about it all was that Otto showed no sign of even *trying*! She had asked him if he would not, in time, “move on” and take over—say, the double-bass. He did not seem to think it either feasible or necessary. Or *necessary*! He had been with the big drum for close on twelve years. “It’s a good drum,” he had said. And that was all.

There was no . . . “go” in him. That was it: no go. It was no use denying it. As she watched him—gaunt and spectacled—she wished Otto were more of a man and less of an old maid. The conductor, a boozier with a fat red face full of pimples, some dead and dried up, others still flourishing, was a gallant—every inch a man. He had the elasticity and suppleness and military alertness of the continental military man. She could not tell his rank from the stripes on his sleeves, but thought he must be a major. His heels were high and tipped with indiarubber, and so were straight and smart, but his trousers lacked the footstrap to keep them in position—poor dilapidated Austrian Army! How low it had sunk! Nevertheless they were tight and narrow and showed off the major’s calves to advantage. He wore a pince-nez, but a rimless kind, through which gazed a pair of not altogether innocent eyes. But a man and a leader of men. While Otto had no rubber on his heels. His heels looked eaten away. He wore a pair of spectacles through which he peered from afar at his neighbour’s music-stand, and at the appointed time—not one-tenth of a second too late or too early—down came the drumstick with the long-awaited “Bang!” So incidental, so contemptible was Otto’s

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part that, in addition to handling the drum, he had to turn the pages for the man who played the cymbals. It seemed to her humiliating. It was very wrong that Otto had no music-stand of his own.

He smiled shyly, and she turned away, annoyed. The little modiste walked on, meeting the stream of people who promenaded the path surrounding the bandstand ; a man on high heels, three girls with a pinched look, a famous Tyrolese basso with a long ruddy beard, a *jeune premier* with whiskers and hair like a wig, whose look appeared to imply : "Here am I." Innsbruck looked morose that Sunday morning, and the military band in the park executed music that was tattered, gross, a little common, yet compelling, even like the daily fare of life. Oh, why were there no heroes ? Of course she would have loved to be dominated. That's what men were for. She was a womanly woman. From Vienna. Exalted, brimming over with life. These men of the Tyrol ! And as for Otto ? Why, she could have only waved her hand !

She began to wonder whether she had not really better break it off with him. If men would but realise how little was required from them. Only an outward gesture of romance : a touch sufficed, the rest would be supplied by woman's powerful imagination. Not even so much. A mere abstention from the cruder forms of clumsiness, a surface effort to conceal one's feeblest worst. A mere semblance of mastery, a glimpse of a will. In short, anything at all that would provide the least excuse for loving him as she so wished to do. A minute she stood, thinking. "A minimum. Hardly as much." There passed along the man on high heels, the three girls with the pinched look, the Tyrolese basso with the long ruddy beard, the *jeune premier* with whiskers and hair like a wig, whose look seemed to say, "Here am I" ; then again the man on high heels, the three girls with the pinched look, the Tyrolese singer, and again the "jeune premier" whose look implied, "Here am I." They walked round and round as if the park were a cage and there was nothing to do but walk round—with heads bent, lifeless, sullenly resolute. And again there came along the man on high heels. "The minimum of a minimum. . . ."



## THE CALENDAR

The music resumed. She consulted her programme. Item 7. Potpourri from the operette *Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss. She returned to the stand, prepared to give her fiancé another chance. Otto's part, as before, was contemptible, more contemptible than before. He was inactive. He smiled shyly. She coloured. And, looking at him, she knew. She knew it was no use, her love could not bridge the chasm. He was despised by the rest of the band. A stick-in-the-mud. Not a man. A poor fish. Not for her. . . .

The potpourri, as if suddenly turning the corner, broke out into a resounding march, and behold, the big drum now led the way. Bang! bang! bang! bang! Clearly he whacked, never once missing the chance; and the man with the cymbals, as if one heart and brain operated their limbs, clashed the cymbals in astounding unison, the big drum pounding away, pounding away, without cease or respite. And the trumpeters smiled, as who might say: "Good old big drum! You have come into your own at last!" Bang! bang! bang! bang! The big drum had got loud and excited. And all the people standing around looked as though a great joy had come into their lives; and if they had not been a little shy of each other they would have set out and marched in step with the music, taken up *any* cause and, if only because the music implied that all men were brothers, gone forth if need be and butchered another body of brothers, to the tearing, gladdening strains of the march. (Since it is not known from what rational cause men could have marched to the war.) And if in the park of the neighbouring town there were just such a band with just such a drum which played this same music, the people of the neighbouring town would have marched to this music and exterminated this town. The conductor, like a driver who, having urged his horse over the hill, leans back and leaves the rest to the horse, conceded the enterprise to the drummer, as if the hard, intricate work were now over and he was taking it easy; his baton moved perfunctorily in the wake of the drum, he looked round and acknowledged the greetings of friends with gay, informal salutes of the left hand, his bland smile freely admitting to all that it was no longer himself but the drum which led them to victory. Or rather, the hard fight had already been won and these, behold, were

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the happy results ! Bang ! bang ! bang ! bang ! Strangers passed smiles of intimate recognition, old men nodded reminiscently, small boys gazed with rapt eyes, women looked sweet and bright-eyed, ready to oblige with a kiss ; while the big drum, conscious of his splendid initiative, pounded away without cease or respite.

“ Wonderful ! Beautiful ! ” said the public surrounding them. And thought :

“ Noise is a good thing.”

The band had described the first circle and was repeating it with added gusto and deliberation. The drum and the cymbals were pounding, pounding their due through the wholly inadequate blazing of brass. But these did not mind : “ Every dog has his day ”—and they followed the lead of the drum. He led them. He—Otto ! Her Otto was leading them. God ! Merciful Virgin ! What had she done to deserve such happiness ? Otto ! . . . And she had doubted him, thought there was no “ go ” in him. No *go* ! She burnt red with shame at the mere thought of it. He was all “ go.” And didn’t he make them go, too, the whole lot of them ? How he led them ! Puffing, the sweat streaming down their purple faces, they blazed away till their cheeks seemed ready to burst, but Otto out-drummed them—annihilated their efforts. He—Otto ! O, God ! Watching him, people could hardly keep still. But that none of them stirred and all of them wanted to, added piquancy to the illusion of motion. They stood rooted—while the drum carried on for them : Bang ! bang ! bang ! bang !

“ Marvellous ! ” sighed the public around them.

Her Otto—cock of the walk ! She could scarcely believe her eyes. Standing in front of the crowd, only a few paces from his side and raising herself on her toes ever so gently in rhythm with the music, so that by the very tininess of her movements she seemed to be sending added impetus into the band, as if, indeed, she were pressing with her little feet some invisible pump, she scanned his face with tenderness, in dumb adoration. And Otto at the drum must have felt it, for, at this turn, he put new life into his thundering whacks : *Bang ! bang ! bang ! bang !* he toiled, and the conductor, as if

divining what was afoot, at that moment accelerated the pace of the march.

“Bravo, bravo!” said the people surrounding them.

There was no doubt about it. This was Art. The unerring precision. The wonderful touch. Otto! . . . Otto, as never before, whacked the big drum, whacked it in excitement, in a frenzy, in transcending exaltation. Thundering bangs! And now she knew—what she couldn’t have dreamed—she knew it by his face. Otto was a hero. A leader of men. Something fluttered in her breast, as though a bird had flown in, ready to fly out.

“Now it’s all over,” thought the people, “and we are going home to lunch.” And everyone smiled and felt very happy and gay. A sort of prolonged accelerated thundering of the big drum, and then one tremendous BANG!

The thing was over. The conductor raised a bent hand to the peak of his cap, acknowledging the applause. The bird in her fluttered more wildly than ever. She wanted to cry out, but her throat would not obey. She clutched at her heaving breast with trembling fingers. “My love,” she thought. “My king! My captain! My lord! My padishah!”

## Comments and Reviews

THE Spring publishing season has begun in a quiet way. As far as one can judge from the advance lists, it appears to be a season of not more than average interest. The level of expectation is highest, exceptionally high, among the reprints; a fact to be accepted with resignation. The production of pure literature always appears as a thin stream when we look at what is passing actually beneath our feet.

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The scarcity of books of verse which show more than the tepid competence of the prevailing manner, continues. The standard of publication is still far too low in the matter of verse, probably because the better kind of publisher feels that a book or two of poems will enhance the dignity of his list—a healthy instinct, if a trifle sentimental. The art and criticism of verse have a long period of discipline still to undergo if poetry is to regain its supremacy over the other forms of literature, a supremacy which is inherent, since verse is capable of a more sensitive organisation than prose. But at present, it must be confessed, verse offers less nourishment to the sophisticated adult than it has done at any time in the last three hundred and thirty years; with one or two individual exceptions, it lacks a general social interest. Like Joseph Hall in 1597, the modern reader cannot be satisfied with “the well-known dainties of the time,” when “men rather chuse carelessly to lose the sweet of the kernel, than to urge their teeth with breaking the shell wherein it is wrapped.” The real passion of the age seems to be for the sciences allied to anthropology and psychology, especially when the treatment of them tends to speculation. For this taste the Spring brings forth such plums as “*Psyche: The Cult of Souls and the Belief in Immortality among the Greeks*,” by Erwin Rohde (Kegan Paul); the third volume of Freud’s “*Collected Papers*” (Hogarth Press); and the second volume in that interesting compilation of personal statements, “*Contemporary British Philosophy*” (Allen and Unwin).

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In the matter of reprints, the poets are well-represented. The first volume of Milton’s *Poems*, edited by Professor H. J. C. Grierson (Chatto and Windus), will probably stimulate the Milton revival which is about due, and necessary to restore our sense of proportion in the matter of those recent enthusiasms, Donne and Dryden. The poems of Lovelace are to be edited in two volumes by Mr. C. H. Wilkinson (Oxford Press). W. C. Hazlitt’s edition was the last, and is by no means satisfactory.



## THE CALENDAR

Bishop Henry King is the last of the great Metaphysical poets to find a modern editor. This gap will be filled by Mr. John Sparrow's edition (The Nonesuch Press). The same publishers announce an edition of Blake's writings, containing over fifty collotype plates, which, from the specimen pages we have seen, will be a very beautiful book. What is more important, the text of Blake, which is in a tangled condition, will be re-edited from original sources by Mr. Geoffrey Keynes.

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Christopher Marlowe is legendarily supposed to have died swearing. Documents have recently been discovered which are said to clear up the mystery of the brawl in which he was killed—generally taken to have been a drunken affair. The matter is not of very great importance, but the new papers, to be published by The Nonesuch Press, may throw some light on Marlowe's character, particularly if his violent death turns out to have been connected with his subversive attitude to religion.

\* \* \* \*

The works of the eccentric millionaire, William Beckford, have never been collected. The first two volumes of the "Fonthill" edition of his works are shortly to be published by Mr. Guy Chapman. It is very appropriate that the introduction to the work of this baroque personality should be written by Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell, who is most likely to disengage the essential flavour of Beckford's fascinating style.

\* \* \* \*

The great influence of Seneca on the Elizabethan dramatists has never been thoroughly traced. Chapman goes so far as to make Guise refer to Clermont (*The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*) as "this Senecal man," a term of supreme praise. The translation with which the dramatists must have been familiar, *Seneca, His Tenne Tragedies*, is to be reprinted in the "Tudor Translations" (Constable), with an introduction by Mr. T. S. Eliot, the critic whose sensitized erudition here meets with a subject which should be particularly congenial to his great gifts.

\* \* \* \*

We record with very great regret the death of M. Jacques Rivière, at the age of thirty-nine. M. Rivière succeeded M. André Gide as editor of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* in 1919. He had been actively associated with the paper from its foundation in 1912. We cannot in this place do justice to his great gifts, but those who read the critical studies which he contributed to the *Nouvelle Revue Française* during the last few years will appreciate how rare a mind, in intelligence and in culture, has been lost. The loss is the greater since his later work showed a definite maturing, a

coupling of intuition and judgment, which suggests that even such essays as "De la Sincérité envers Soi-même" or "Sur une crise de la Littérature" do not realise the whole potentiality of his mind.

\* \* \* \*

The exhibition of the film, "The Last Laugh," at the Capitol on Thursday, March 19, was adorned rather unnecessarily by the personal appearance of Hr. Emil Jannings, who played the chief part. The story is definitely Victorian, almost Galsworthian. It is about the childishly vain hall-porter of a big hotel who is superannuated and sent to the basement as lavatory attendant. Hr. Jannings, an actor with many of the qualities of Tree, overdoes the "character" of his part. The pathos of the poor old man sitting in the lavatory while his successor struts in glorious uniform up above was carried over into bathos. With such an unattractive story, it is hardly possible to compare the film to "Destiny" or "Warning Shadows." We understand Hr. Jannings to be an advocate of realism on the screen, and "The Last Laugh" perhaps represents the reaction from "Caligari." But whatever its defects, it has a definite æsthetic superiority to almost all American films. The deliberate slowing-down of the action, though not responsible for this superiority of the German film, helps to make possible the attainment of an æsthetic equivalent to crude realism.

## Edward VII.

KING EDWARD VII. A Biography. By SIR SIDNEY LEE.  
Vol. I. From Birth to Accession. (Macmillans, £1. 11s. 6d. net.)

This book is dead. Thousands and thousands of facts are presented, and facts need not kill a book, but these facts do, because they are trivial, disconnected, and presented with incredible pomposity. Sir Sidney Lee has many valuable qualities: he is accurate, learned, temperate, he never stoops to sycophancy. But as to the eternal importance of his theme he has no misgivings. He cannot be too serious or swell himself out too large when he mentions royalty, the least sentence he writes must be tumid, gravid, authoritative, apoplectic, apocalyptic. Kings may do wrong like the Kaiser or come to grief like the Czar, but they may never be presented lightly—that is the sin against the Lord's Anointed—and when the House of Guelf is concerned, it becomes physically impossible to use too many words.

Despite the restraints on boyish liberty and the educational discipline in which the paternal wisdom chiefly made itself visible to the son, the boyish faith in his dead father's exalted and disinterested motive lived on.

Such a sentence pops when trodden upon, like seaweed, yet it would be wrong to say it contains nothing. A diplomatic residuum survives—something gummy, something as subtle in its way as literature though it exudes from the opposite end of the pen. Read the sentence again, and do not try to find out whether the Prince liked his father or was cowed by him, whether he obeyed him or disobeyed, for these are not the points. Consider instead the repetition of the adjective "boyish." It is significant. In literature a repeated adjective does something, and it does something here too: it helps us to forget that we are reading about a boy. The five words "boyish," "paternal," "son," "boyish," "father," are used with a sort of inverted art. They are so many nails in the coffin of reality. They are used without vision, without music, without feeling, and consequently they leave us with a deep sense of the abstract importance of royalty. To convey that importance is the aim of an official biographer, and the achievement of the volume under review. That's why the book's dead.

What of the facts themselves? It is the attempt to inflate them into national events that makes them trivial: they were not trivial to the Prince. It mattered very much to him in the summer of 1867 that the Sultan of Turkey should receive a proper decoration. "I wish you would write to the Queen on the subject as soon as possible," he told Lord Derby, "as there is no time to be lost." Lord Derby thought a G.C.S.I. sufficient, but the Sultan let it be known that only the K.G. would do, and the Prince warmly con-

curred, for he had pleasant memories of his own stay in Constantinople. But Queen Victoria had never been to Constantinople, did not mean to go, had not invited the Sultan to England, was disinclined to do anything that pleased her son, and, finally, did not think it right to confer the Garter, which is a Christian emblem, upon a Moslem ruler's leg. The Prince was in despair. His energy and tact were strained to their utmost, and, continuing to lose no time, he scarcely left the Sultan's side for ten days. All went well, thanks to his assiduity. The Queen relented, there was a lunch at Windsor, a reception at the India Office, and—triumph of triumphs!—the bestowal of the Garter on the deck of the Royal Yacht at Spithead during a howling storm. The Sultan shed tears of gratitude and joy. To him, as to his young host, it must have seemed that an event of international importance had occurred. But before many years had passed, the Sultan was assassinated, and even earlier the Prince turned from Turkey to Russia and was equally flurried over a colonelcy in a Russian regiment, which the Czar offered him and the Queen would not let him accept. "We are more independent without all these foreign honours," wrote the Queen. And so to Ober-Ammergau, which made a "serious impression." He "had never been so struck with anyone in his life" as with the peasant who played the part of Christ, and managed to have a talk with him before proceeding to military manœuvres in Hampshire.

In this constant fluttering—which forecasts the still swifter movements of his grandson—the Prince was not the least trivial or inconsistent from his own point of view. His life sprang straight out of his circumstances and character and we shall never think clearly on the urgent subject of royalty until we realise this. If we do sometimes get cynical during eight hundred pages, it is usually the fault of Sir Sidney Lee. He should not imply that trinkets and uniforms, lunches, launches, and railway trains have any value outside the purely human, nor should he state that the subject of his memoir is a "great historic figure."

The Prince was indeed anxious to be a figure, and always clamouring for work, real work. He belonged to the great army of the constitutional unemployed which thronged Europe in the nineteenth century and is only just beginning to thin. The royal families bred abundantly, and there were numerous restless sons. In the fifteenth century these young men would have become condottieri, but they were constitutional, so they had to represent something or other, they didn't much mind what. It is pathetic to see them in their crowded palaces, scanning the political horizons for some form of popular life, and asking to represent it. An Austrian goes to Mexico, a Dane to Greece, and the Prince of Wales, debarred from more distant quests, attempts to be identified with the island of Ireland. His mother refused. She felt—and



perhaps rightly—that she was doing all the representing necessary to the Empire and all the work modern royalty can ever do : signing papers, seeing Ministers, opening special boxes. And she felt, too—and some other observers have agreed with her—that the Prince sought publicity rather than work, and was too impetuous and desultory to make a satisfactory Viceroy. At any rate, after playing with his hopes for a time, she refused, and Ireland joined the long series of snubs she administered to her son. For the first fifty years of his life he was scarcely allowed to do anything, or to go anywhere save in a social capacity, and it is therefore impossible that a book dealing with those years can have any historical importance. It is the domestic tragedy that stands out. As a mother, Queen Victoria behaved very badly. The boy was over-educated by elderly experts, and when his rather ordinary mind and very normal character did not respond, she put him on a shelf as a failure. He grew into a middle-aged man, but remained on the shelf—and woe betide him if the sound of breaking glass came to his mother's ears. It never occurred to her that the Mordaunt and the Baccarat cases and other forbidden sweets could be ascribed to enforced idleness ; or that she herself could be indirectly responsible for them. She may have been right to shelve him, but she was also cruel and blind.

The last two hundred pages of the book are the best because there is here less disproportion between the facts and the gravity with which they are related. The squabbles between the Prince and the Kaiser increased the existing mistrust between England and Germany, so that the royal personages managed to represent something at last, and a little to accelerate the outbreak of an European war. Here is one momentous step towards the catastrophe :—

After a short call on the Duke of Gmünden, on leaving Homburg, the Prince on 10th September reached Vienna, where he donned for the first time the resplendent uniform of his new Austro-Hungarian regiment of Hussars—gold-frogged tunic, red breeches, Hessian boots and shako. From his host's lips he at once learnt to his mortification that his nephew had stipulated that no royal guest save himself should be present at the Viennese Court during his forthcoming stay. No doubt as to the Kaiser's meaning was permissible.

When you have assigned the " his-es " to their proper owners, you will realise that here was indeed an insult. The Hessian boots had to be pulled off, the red breeches to follow them, and the outraged and denuded uncle withdrew entirely from Austrian soil, to seek refuge with the King and Queen of Roumania. In his next volume Sir Sidney will deal with the progress of the feud, and with its pendent, King Edward's cultivation of a particular type of Frenchman. The volume will probably be more interesting than

the present one, but it is sure to show the same deadness of outlook and of style. Sir Sidney is not stupid or uncritical, but officialism has destroyed his scale of values. He has taken neither of the courses open to a responsible biographer. Hessian boots, red breeches, Garters—they can be treated from two points of view : the scientific, when they vanish, and the sympathetic, when they are seen to be of genuine importance to their wearers. But they are not of importance to the universe or even to Europe ; nothing, nothing matters there, except distinction of spirit, and this King Edward VII did not happen to possess.

E. M. FORSTER.

## Foundations.

THE MENTALITY OF APES. By W. KÖHLER. Kegan Paul  
16s.

This book is not an attempt to prove that the chimpanzee is capable of miracles of thinking. For this reason it is a very valuable document in the study of intelligence, and the claim which, with all modesty, Professor Köhler makes for the chimpanzees, after four years' close and affectionate observation of *untrained* animals at the Teneriffe Anthropoid Station, is that thought definitely enters into their mental processes. The experiments he conducted were of the simplest form, but the problems he set the animals *were* designed with a nicety which excluded, ultimately, the possibility of solution by an animal such as the behaviourists postulate, a complex of motor reactions. The basic problem set the animals in many different ways was to reach some fruit they desired, which was so placed that they could only get to it, or get it to them, by the invention of a new process. One example must suffice. Sultan, a young and particularly bright chimpanzee, wanted to get a banana which lay outside his cage. He had already taught himself the use of a stick in dragging an object to him, but neither of the two sticks in his cage was long enough, in the present instance, to reach the fruit. He tried each of the sticks in turn, even tried pushing one stick with the other till it touched the fruit, but as they were not joined together this was of no practical use, though it was a good error, from the point of view of rational conduct. At last he admitted that he was baffled and sat back in his cage and played with the sticks, one of which was hollow, and the other thin enough to fit in it. He joined the two sticks together, and immediately turned to the bars and raked in the fruit. Whether the joining was an accident or not does not really matter, for he at once made use of the new stick, so that he must have had in his mind what we should call an idea of length, though only as *long enough* and *not long enough*. The author has a chapter on "Chance and Imitation" to which we refer the sceptical reader.

The ape, like the man, is not continually rational. Most of his life is, no doubt, governed by affective relations. One of the saddest sections of the book confesses that the apes try to solve a problem, which is only superficially the same as an earlier one, by the repetition of inappropriate solutions remembered from earlier problems. Periods of inertia, mental fatigue due to unsuccessful grappling with the problem, laziness, age, and personality, all affect the efficiency of the ape's mental processes just as they do those of human beings. The tendency, particularly strong under certain conditions, to repeat old solutions, whether practicable in the circumstances or not, is a human trait with which the critic of civilisation and culture will be very familiar. Another interesting point is the frequently repeated observation that the elements of the successful solution are associated in a flash; however much work may have been spent on a problem, the answer comes as an inspiration—a fact also observed by mathematicians (Poincaré is a familiar example) and poets. The apes may serve to remind us that the most intelligent people are those susceptible to "inspiration." They may also remind us that "inspiration," poetic or otherwise, has nothing to do with emotional frenzy, which, when it overtakes the chimpanzees, renders them incapable of a correct solution. Professor Köhler's observations of the social life of the animals are full of interest, and, it must be said, charm. We really begin to accept our relationship to these creatures with some emotional warmth, not as with the vague assent to a hypothesis. Their behaviour as a loose political group is most instructive, and it is a pity that there was no opportunity of observing family relationships. In spite of this, there is enough information in the book to make one say of these particular apes not "how almost human," but "how very human." Actually, of course, millions of our fellow-countrymen go through life without ever solving a problem so difficult, relatively to the achievement of Galileo or Newton, as that of Sultan when he made two short sticks into a long one.

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## THE ORIGIN OF MAN. MAN AND HIS SUPERSTITIONS.

By CARVETH READ. Second Editions, revised. Cambridge University Press. 5s. and 12s. 6d. respectively.

Although there is undoubtedly a difference in intellectual power between individual apes, on Professor Read's theory we should expect to find it less strongly marked than in civilised man. His hypothesis traces the rise of man from the movement which led the ancestral anthropoid out of the forest and a vegetarian diet to hunt his living meat over lightly wooded plains. It follows that the form of human society developed out of the organisation of the hunting-pack, and this is a view which Professor Read sustains with skill and erudition and a sense of style, and without that forcing

of the evidence which so often accompanies hypothetical discussions. It was during the early days of hunting that the utility of leaders became apparent, both to the leader and the led, but it is evident that even in a highly-organised pack there is still almost as great a demand for initiative on the part of subordinate members of it as there is on the leaders. It was probably after the invention of agriculture, which introduced the possibility of living by routine, that the gap between the individual and the mass became seriously wide. And it remained more or less constant until the industrialisation of civilisation, by drawing the arts and crafts (previously the refuge of initiative) into routine production, made life a matter of automatic functioning for almost everybody except the poet and the scientist pure. Society still depends on these two for new modes of feeling and new directions of activity. The apparent leaders, the financiers and commercial magnates, are mere functionaries, organisers of effort with politicians for their subalterns, in whom a remnant of the primitive urge to leadership still survives.

Professor Read's second volume contains a detailed account of the surviving instances of animism and magic as they exist among primitive peoples (and incidentally among ourselves). An examination of the conditions which gave rise to these fallacious, but momentarily useful, explanations of the order of natural phenomena, is of the utmost importance, since through it we can attain to some knowledge of the constitution of the mind of contemporary man. The reader will find Professor Read of the greatest assistance in clarifying his ideas, in giving historical perspective to his conceptions of different levels of culture, and his bold exposure of contemporary barbarisms will attract those who wish to emancipate themselves completely from the no longer acceptable myths of the past. This is not, as it may seem, remote from the subject of literature, nor even poetry. Poetry is not directly concerned with myths, as romantic practice might seem to imply, but only with myths which are capable of symbolising the poet's reactions to the life he actually lives; that they should be familiar to his audience is, of course, a necessary condition of communication. We believe that the modern poet will tend to a more frequent use of the myths peculiar to our own civilisation, the accepted body of scientific theory (for its absolute truth is neither here nor there), which is bound to replace the theological myths surviving from the last great effort of human intelligence, the scholastic philosophy. For this reason we have drawn attention to these books, which discuss these fundamental matters with integrity, and with the charm which complete sincerity and lack of pretentiousness brings with it. Our readers will, no doubt, be able to bridge the gap between the work of Professor Köhler and Professor Read. To us the path of tradition between the ape Sultan and the modern engineer appears to need only a little clearing done on it to become quite plain, and the fact need be no discredit to the engineer. Whether we shall



ever have any but a hypothetical bridge between the ape and the animistic savage is, perhaps, not to be hoped for, but we see a very fruitful field for investigation in the connection between animism and idealistic philosophy, between the savage "soul-stuff" and, for instance, the Kantian "thing-in-itself." It would do no harm at present if the prestige of certain of these metaphysical conceptions which are commonly made the basis for a judgment of poetic values should be diminished.

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PRINCIPLES OF LITERARY CRITICISM. By I. A. RICHARDS.  
Kegan Paul. 10s. 6d.

We are not often privileged to follow so lucid a discussion of the fundamental conditions of aesthetic judgment as that with which the above volume presents us. Its analysis of current methods of evaluating works of art is delicate, destructive, and final; the mechanism with which it replaces them may not have the same quality of finality, but its adaptation to the needs of our time is so nearly complete that we cannot imagine its essential modification. The tone of the book is astringent, and its comment uncompromising, but it is not dogmatic; it offers us "not a rock to shelter under or to cling to, rather an efficient aeroplane in which to ride the tempestuous turmoil of change" to which the human mind is native.

It is in definiteness of statement rather than in any novelty of conception that Mr. Richards' preliminary destruction is valuable. Anyone who has already freed himself from the system of values imposed on literature by the Kantian metaphysic, with its categorical imperative of judgment, will have been teased by the unreality of such terms as ideal Beauty or pure Beauty, and its derivative, the specifically aesthetic emotion. This dissatisfaction is the first step to a real appreciation of literature, but it provides no effective instrument for the organisation of the responses evoked by the impact of actual specimens of the literary "stuff." Mr. Richards arrives at a basis for the judgment of value by examining the processes of psychology. He does not differentiate between the kind of stimulus which we receive from raw life and the kind which we receive from the representation of life in the arrangements recognised as artistic forms. He shows, in fact, that there is no basic difference, though there is a difference of degree in the quality of response, which we receive from certain arrangements and not from others; it is this difference of degree which determines his scale of values. The created work is valuable when the response to the impulses which it sets up is the satisfaction of an appetency or of appetencies which does not involve "the frustration of some equal or *more important* appetency." It is obvious that if this definition of value is to be anything but a dodge round the problem, the critic must particularise the hierarchy of appetencies, must state the positive from which his comparative *more important* is

derived. We could wish that Mr. Richards had been more explicit on this point, though, if we understand him rightly, it is a matter which is determined by biological evolution, a fact which naturally follows from his destruction of the absolute point of reference. The physio-psychological entity, the individual, is continually changing under the constant impact of sensations, so that the same work can never evoke the same response; so, "there are specialist and universal poets, and the specialist may be developing in a manner either consistent or inconsistent with general development, a consideration of extreme importance in judging the value of his work." Here is an opportunity for a false syllogism to assert that the poet who is in line with the general development is a better poet than the one who is not, when really all one can deduce from the premises is that he will exist *as a poet* for a longer time.

This existence of poetry *in* the audience is the crucial point in Mr. Richards' theory of value. It has an obvious affinity with the Augustan conception of poetry as the supreme social attitude, and similarly, in spite of his codicils, his reasoning tends to diminish the importance of the solitary illuminant who is the natural outcome of a metaphysical theory of criticism. Mr. Richards admits the possibility of "admirable though utterly eccentric experience," and claims the right to neglect work which may be "admirable in itself" if "a general approximation to it is impossible." He says, too, "what is excellent and what is to be imitated are not necessarily the same," though his criterion of excellence is that which we tend to imitate. His definition of value does not admit of a thing being "admirable in itself." In his anxiety, which we appreciate, to assert the "normality" of the poetic mind, he has inadvertently put in juxtaposition the mentality of "the usual and ordinary man" and that of Blake, Nietzsche and the Apocalypst, and naturally recoils at their incompatibility. Certainly this difference can be only relative, not one of kind, yet Mr. Richards seems to underestimate the gap, and, for the moment, though only for the moment, to threaten us with a dynasty of "occasional" poets.

We should give an inadequate notion of the wealth of ideas in Mr. Richards' book if we neglected to draw attention to the chapters of technical—more particularly literary—criticism. His analysis of the effect of metre, which he concludes to be "for the most difficult and most delicate utterances . . . the all but inevitable means," is an example of the heightened understanding which is reached by his way of approach to the subject:

"Metre adds to all the variously fated expectancies which make up rhythm a definite temporal pattern, and its effect is not due to our perceiving a pattern in something outside us, but to our becoming patterned ourselves. With every beat of the metre a tide of anticipation in us turns and swings, setting up as it does so extraordinarily extensive sympathetic vibrations."

The chapters on "Imagination" and allied subjects are extremely illuminating, and many ideas are set down which should yield very profitably to a fuller exposition. There are a couple of pages on the nature of Tragedy from which we should like to quote, since they are in such contrast to the usual comments which that breeding-ground of sentimentality brings forth.

A suggestive assertion is that "irony is constantly a characteristic of poetry which is of the highest order." Certainly there is a high percentage of irony in the poetry which we most admire at the present time. It would need longer space than a review to discuss such a problem, which as Mr. Richards states it, is made of fundamental importance. Since it is only one of a multitude of fine perceptions, it may, perhaps, stand as a sort of colophon to an appreciation which is far from exhaustive.

EDGELL RICKWORD.

POEMS BY JOHN SKELTON. Edited by RICHARD HUGHES.  
(Heinemann. 15s.)

Few poets have been more versatile than Skelton, either in their methods or their moods, but his versatility is less the measure of himself than the result of his environment. In 1500 the long period of literary sterility which followed Chaucer had not yet given rise to the efflorescence of the Elizabethans; the Wars of the Roses had but lately ended; the Reformation was only foreshadowed. Skelton, though a conservative, could not fail, as an intellectual and enquiring mind, to react to the influences of unrest which surrounded him, and this disquietude is reflected in the preponderantly satiric tone of his poems.

The selection made by Mr. Hughes leaves little to be desired, but one cannot altogether accept his criticism. Writing of *Speke, Parot*, he says that "the extraordinary sense of rhythm, the extraordinary intellectual grasp that not only makes every word significant but every juxtaposition of words, every possible turn and shade of meaning, render it one of those few poems that can be read with increasing admiration, increasing comprehension and delight, year after year." This is the exaggeration of partisanship. Even cutting out the stanzas which are definitely satiric, the poem that remains is a formless congeries of description, learning and facetiousness: its value lies in its metrical skill and its naive vigour:

*"With my becke bent, my lyttil wanton eye,  
My feeders fresh as is the emrawde green,  
About my neck a circulet like the ryche rubye,  
My lyttil leggyes, my feet both fete and clene,  
I am a mynyon to wayt uppon a quene."*

As a metrist Skelton is always interesting, whether using this unanalysed form of pentameter, or the intricate versification of *Woffully Araid*, or the short, running, frequently-rhymed metre

which he usually prefers. He can be as sententious and heavy as Lydgate or Gower, chained to the cumbrous machinery of allegory, and the lifeless iambic, but in his lyrical masterpiece, *Phyllyp Sparowe*, he writes with a fluent vitality which they rarely attain. And in his satiric and descriptive poems, *Colyn Cloute* or *Elynour Rummynge*, this same fluency is evident, breaking down the wearisome decorum, and freeing expression from the turgid rhetoric of his predecessors. This latter poem, far from being "one of the few really abstract poems in the language"—as Mr. Hughes would have it—is a piece of extremely vivid imaginative writing. Its bawdiness and vigour are as much a part of Skelton as the fragrance of *Phyllyp Sparowe* and the erudition of *Garlande of Laurrel*.

Mr. Hughes has done a valuable service in rescuing Skelton from the scholars and presenting his work with the minimum of impedimenta.

D. M. G.

POEMS OF THIRTY YEARS. By GORDON BOTTOMLEY.  
(Constable. 2s.)

There is in some of Mr. Bottomley's lyrical poetry a strain of individuality which shows up to better advantage in the small dimensions of the "Chambers of Imagery" than in this collected edition. Roughly between 1902 and 1909, there were indications that Mr. Bottomley had something original to say and that his sensitiveness to words would enable him to find an appropriate technique. The impulse, though strong enough to permit him to write such interesting poems as "Babel," "The Orchard Feast," "The End of the World," "Netted Strawberries," and the Hymns to Form, to Imagination, and to Touch, was not strong enough, or did not last long enough, to enable him to write sustainedly without reliance on literary models. A considerable part of this volume is plainly derivative. The Pre-Raphaelite, or "pictorial" influence from the early Tennyson and Rossetti is self-evident. It is strange that a mind in some ways so fresh should be content with such obvious pastiche as the poems in ballad-form here reprinted; for this the example of Rossetti and Swinburne is perhaps responsible. The influence of Browning, led sometimes to a deliberate avoidance of euphony, and to an over-free articulation of the terms of expression which resulted in such loose-limbed movements as this:

but tall small she  
Ruffled a bosom, swung a sleeve,  
Peacocked a skirt swan-yearningly  
As though her body curved to leave  
Itself to dote in worshipry. (1902.)

We do not wish to multiply instances of this forced ingenuity



## THE CALENDAR

of language, but to show that the above instance is not an isolated one we quote a few lines produced at different periods :

Helen :                               the consort's crown  
Of your upthrust hybrid and thrasonic realm . . .

Sounding delirious and neurotic sistrums. . . .  
(1899.)

Like window-veils in mirrors a hum  
Of little flies waving their feet  
Dims the air like a flicker of heat . . . (1904.)

In a hawthorn's light she pondered,  
While dark dew her gleam-feet laundered. (1909.)

In the last two examples, the desire to be poetic has completely broken down the control of the instrument of expression. It is difficult to see how, with the regard he seems to have towards the English language, Mr. Bottomley could pass such affected and trivial statements as we suppose to be contained in those lines.

When Mr. Bottomley is most nearly original, as in the poems we have named (except "The Orchard Feast," which is a perfectly successful piece in the romantic tradition), it seems that there has been a conscious effort to maintain the integrity of his feeling, and because of that consciousness, the poetic fusion is prevented; when the intuition of rhythm is lost, there is no real organisation, but a setting side by side of rhythmically incompatible masses :

Blindness and Blake and all primalval things  
(Blindness, that moonlight of the sense's space)  
Contain a primitive order unconfined,  
Depths of denial, wells of might—

Form without reason, with no explanation by uses : ”

What this lacks is not interest of a superficially intellectual kind, but aesthetic cohesion ; the subject has not been felt poetically. This lack we find general in Mr. Bottomley's verse, though its indebtedness to the successes of the past may, we understand, give it a momentary effectiveness. What it means to write from a pure and unprejudiced sense of words we may best exemplify by a stanza from one of the rare poems which make one wonder why Mr. Bottomley has not realised finer things, from " *Netted Strawberries*," a poem of a wren :

Though I alight and swing  
I never reach the things that tumble and crush,  
And if I had such long legs as a thrush  
The web would tangle and cling.

E. R.

JOHN KEATS. By AMY LOWELL. (Jonathan Cape. 2 vols. 42s.)

IN her preface Miss Lowell asserts that the "twentieth century has been silent in regard to Keats." Her two bulky volumes shatter

that silence with a muffled detonation, whose noise will be heard at a great distance. This is unfortunate: for one cannot admit that her contribution to Keats literature adds to our knowledge of him in proportion to the size of her work. As a biography it is, as far as it concerns facts, minute and all-embracing, but Sir Sidney Colvin had already told as much as it was necessary to know. It does not matter that Keats's hair was a fine reddish-gold and not carrot; nor that when visiting the Snooks, he and Brown, "although they reached the Snooks' house by three, found dinner already over." These are details which obscure rather than clarify a portrait, are as unnecessary and unimportant as the imaginative descriptions of scenery and weather with which Miss Lowell overburdens an already detailed account. As a psychological study the book is of little more value. Miss Lowell prefers to rely on her own obvious inferences rather than scientific deductions. One is grateful to her, incidentally, for standing up for Fanny Brawne. The letters from her to Fanny Keats after John's death, to which she has had access, go some way to disproving a malignant attitude, unjustified by the facts, which previous historians of Keats have held towards her.

It was, however, the critical sections of the book which were most eagerly awaited, since it was to be expected that a poet would really have something to say. Miss Lowell has talked much, but said little. She has made no attempt to analyse the poems *qua* poems, but has furnished a running commentary on them, interwoven with a minute chronology and motherly suggestions. If only Keats had lived in our enlightened century, science might have saved him from tuberculosis, and at any rate his friends would have been sensible enough to stop him playing cricket when he was already ill, she says. And of the poems she speaks in the same vein:—*St. Agnes' Eve* "is no mere charming tale of love . . . but a profoundly dramatic study of an unplumbed mystery," and, summing up her theory of its counterpoint, "Past death, misunderstanding, the imprisonment of personality, the lovers escape towards life together, not into a live-happy-ever-after kind of existence, but into the stress and storm of a future which at least they face side by side." To *Endymion* she devotes 140 pages, to *Hyperion* but half-a-dozen. Her criticism of the former is prefaced by an ingenious but not valuable attempt to trace a connection between it and Drayton's *Endimion and Phoebe*, and when she turns to deal with the poem itself, she begins: "Book I. So Keats, sitting down at Carisbrooke, either indoors or out, began his poem:

'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.'

The next line came afterwards—after the briefest of intervals perhaps, but still afterwards," Direct criticism is scanty, but Miss Lowell pads it out with her own hypotheses and a recapitulation of the narrative.

It is in her criticism of *Hyperion*, however, that she breaks down completely. Of the two versions she says, "the one is a failure, the other is too fragmentary to enable us to come to a decision concerning it." She suggests that Keats wrote the second version—usually and, I think, correctly considered to be the first—"to show that he was capable of the grand style if ever poet was." It was, she adds, a work of "sheer cleverness . . . merely a tracing from a pattern of an older age." This shows a complete failure to recognise the continual advance which Keats was making in this poem on the work even of the Odes. As a thinker he was developing and his technique did not lag behind.

But it is impossible to discuss the book in detail. While admitting the value of the biographical part and the interest of those passages in which Miss Lowell has been able to clear up doubtful questions, one cannot accept the book as a whole, for it is written from a misconception of the critic's function. It would be easy to write of it sarcastically, but to do so would be to show a lack of respect for Miss Lowell's devotion to Keats and for the labour which her book must have involved.

D. M. G.

MYRTLE. By STEPHEN HUDSON. (Constable. 6s.)

It is typical of Mr. Hudson's art that the chief character in this book should not appear in person. Myrtle is the book, yet nowhere is she drawn *sur le vif*. She emerges gradually from the shadows of nine personal reactions, gathering from each a new firmness of line and depth of colour, until finally she attains a living solidity. The book is written in nine chapters, each of which, a complete study in the form of a soliloquy, reveals a distinct aspect of Myrtle in respect to an isolated and extraneous incident. The ultimate effect is a cumulative one and, therefore, depends on the intrinsic value of each chapter; for only in so far as the several characters live is Myrtle's response valid.

It is in the third and last chapters that Mr. Hudson is most successful, though all are but modifications of the same process. In the former it is Sylvia who is speaking. She has appeared previously as Myrtle's favourite sister and the wife of Hildebrand Moreton, so that already, by acquiring an individuality of her own, she has to a certain extent delineated the character of the principal figure. Here she makes Myrtle the confidante of Hildebrand's desertion and her own disillusionment, the nature of which is subtly chosen to heighten the significance of her intimacy with her sister. We are not told what attitude Myrtle takes, or what is the psychological effect of this disclosure of life, but her sympathy is implied, and that her reaction should be allowed to remain tacit is evidence of Mr. Hudson's very fine artistic sense. When Richard Kurt becomes the protagonist, Myrtle's presence is more definite,

but only for moments ; it is still the influence of her personality which is cogent. That she should marry Kurt is not the important point, but rather that she should cause him to revolt from the tyranny of the loveless marriage which for twenty years had oppressed him.

The range of Mr. Hudson's sympathy, however, is limited. He writes convincingly of polite, leisured society, but outside that field his grasp is less sure. Marcel and Nanny, and to some extent Moriarty, are conventional, rather lifeless figures ; the Vendramin circle, on the other hand, is described with the most subtle finish. For the most part, his style is admirable for its nice lucidity, but there is a tendency for it to become monotonous ; the *tempo* is so regular that the rhythm is sometimes wearisome. Yet this economy of language is the counterpart of the stern emotional restraint which is the most pleasing quality of this charming and accomplished artist.

D. M. G.

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PLAINTÉ CONTRE INCONNU. Par P. DRIEU LA ROCHELLE.  
(Nouvelle Revue Française. 7frs. 50.)

The four pieces collected in this volume may be called *tales* though the term is not very exactly descriptive. The *conte* has undergone radical changes since the time of Maupassant even, and absorbed many of the elements of the essay and the "character." The importance of the narrative is reduced to a minimum and the thing often resolves itself into a study of temperament and manners.

M. Drieu la Rochelle is one of the young post-war writers whose small volumes of poems INTERROGATIONS and FOND DE CANTINE, though perhaps evidence of an unusual sensibility rather than of a specifically poetic gift, are certainly among the most interesting of contemporary productions. In the present volume he has extended his range of expression very considerably, and that part of the English reading public which is curious as to the work of the younger French writers and accepts without much discrimination the reputations which somehow find their way across the Channel, cannot afford to ignore his work. M. Drieu la Rochelle has not the facility, which sometimes degenerates into virtuosity, of contemporaries more familiar among us, like MM. Morand, Giraudoux, Maurois and Mauriac, he hangs on the trail of his quarry with a persistence which is sometimes agonising. So Gonzague, the objective of *Le Valise Vide*, is followed through a maze of parties, chance meetings in bars, liaisons, etc., until the pursuer has drained the last drop from his devitalised soul. Like M. Morand, M. Drieu la Rochelle is, and knows himself to be, the observer of a distempered generation, though there is a reserve, a fastidiousness in the latter's manipulation of his material, which implies a consciousness more adult, more detached, than that of his contemporaries. Even down



to his deliberate sententiousness, he is rather like a man from the eighteenth century surveying the adolescent sensibility which is at the root of almost all recent French literature which is not prematurely senile. He is of the generation which has ceased to flatter itself on its disillusionment, without for that rushing into facile idealism or promiscuous satisfactions.

“ Il renfermait une lourde couche d’amour et de foi, il ne voulait pas la livrer aux becs distraits.”

The personality of the author is not obtruded, however keenly it makes itself felt. This detachment allows the admirably precise vivisection of *Anonymes* and *Nous fûmes surpris*. Towards the character of Liessies in *Le Pique-Nique*, from which the above quotation is taken, there does seem to be a slight emotional prejudice and the story is unnecessarily complicated with retrospect and digression. But this story has the merit common to the others, that the ordinary social contacts of young men and women are presented with the particularity which marks them definitely of this time and of no other, and yet with a clarity, with an objectification, which ensures their independent existence.

E. R.

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MARTIN ARROWSMITH. By SINCLAIR LEWIS. (Jonathan Cape. 7s. 6d.)

*Martin Arrowsmith* is the story of genius in Main Street ; of Gottlieb, the idealist scientist, and the Men of Measured Merriment. It is vigorous and engrossing and written in a firmer and more solid style than Mr. Lewis has shown before, but it is not always convincing. The distinction between idealism and materialism is too crudely emphasized, although Martin and Leora are robust imaginative creations. They set the tone of the characterisation, but leading, as they do, a real and passionate existence, the Pickershaughs and Tozers appear as lifeless improvisations ; as caricatures rather than people. The harmony of the book is thus weakened by the too harsh disparity in the texture of negatives and positives.

The same weakness is noticeable in the construction of their peculiar settings. The McGurk Institute is an oasis of reality in a desert of shams ; the social life which surrounds it is pastiche. True, much of the book is satirical and therefore does not demand fairness, but to have its deepest effect, the evils which it attacks or the attitudes which it condemns, must be adequately realised. The monotonous joviality of Clif, the insincerity of Holabird and Joyce’s conventional restraint become insipid and wearisome. Indeed the episode with the latter might well have been left out. Her appearance on the plague-stricken island and Martin’s momentary infatuation have an obvious dramatic value, but the last 50 pages of the book, after Leora’s death, add nothing to one’s conception of Martin, and are a tiresome anti-climax.

It is a powerful book chiefly because Mr. Lewis has written it as an American and not as an English immigrant. He has not relied upon an extraneous culture, but has used his own language with its vigorous idiom and frequently vivid slang. Leora and Martin are unsophisticated people; they are the positive part of a crude civilisation, the "live wires" in a straggling Main Street.

D.M.G.

### THREE FURTHER PLAYS OF LUIGI PIRANDELLO.

Translated from the Italian by DR. ARTHUR LIVINGSTON.  
(J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd. 10s. 6d.)

None of the three plays contained in this new volume has been produced in England, and of the three plays in the previous volume, two only have been seen on the stage—*Six Characters in Search of an Author*, given by the Stage Society for two performances in London, and *Henry IV.*, of which the Cambridge A.D.C. recently gave a remarkably fine production, filling their theatre for a week with audiences drawn from all over England. Pirandello is, therefore, unknown to the London theatre-goer, but even a reading of his plays is enough to convince one that, apart from Mr. Shaw, we have no dramatist of anything like the same class in this country.

Unfortunately, the new volume is no better translated than the last. Mr. Arthur Livingston, who was responsible in the first volume, for the translation of *Così è, se vi pare!*—which he ineptly rendered by the facetious "Right You are! (If You Think So)"—has this time translated all three plays, and the reader is constantly irritated by such Americanisms as "tea and cookies," "My, what a row!" "You will rest *up* a little," "I am *all* tired out," "light-haired," etc. Mr. Livingston's want of linguistic tact is such that in a perfectly serious passage he is capable of the following:

MADDALENA: I know—I know. He *is* mad about her!  
And do you know, if he had not been really in love  
with her, I am sure what has happened would not  
have happened.

MAURIZIO: Fabio is a good boy.

Nor is Mr. Livingston's power of expression equal to the demands Pirandello makes. Here is an obscure passage:

BALDOVINO: That is not sufficient. You see, it's this way, Marquis. Inevitably, try as we may, we make ourselves over. Let me explain. I come into this house, and right away—as far as you are concerned—I become the man that I am going to be—the man that I have the possibility of being. I make myself over—that is to say, I present myself to you in a manner adapted to the relationship I am about to establish with you, etc.

The "Translator's Note" is all that an introduction should not be. Mr. Livingston seems incapable of clear thinking. He is also incapable of stating a fact.

He gives none of the information we want—neither the dates of the plays, nor the principle on which he has selected them. He tells us nothing about Pirandello, and we do not know whether these three plays represent the work of two or of thirty years—except for a passage which suggests that all Pirandello's plays have been written since 1919. Instead, we get the vaguest nonsense about the "Stream of Life," a stream, we are told, "which Bergson would call the vital urge, and Freud, may be, the Unconscious." It is deplorable that such stuff should be given to the English public by a firm of publishers as respectable as Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd. The paper, typography, and format are all singularly unpleasant; in fact, this volume, like the first, is a most unattractive book, and it is a relief to find that it was printed in America, and not in England.

Each of these three new plays shows Pirandello's extraordinary gift of dialectic and of psychological analysis. Such is the substance of the plays, and it is exhibited in a dramatic composition of ingenious construction. Our aesthetic pleasure is got from the harmony the plot makes with the theory of the play. But they are plays in two dimensions only, for although the characters are not purely gargoyles through which the author's ideas run out—as are so many of the characters in Mr. Shaw's plays—they have a purely intellectual life, and one cannot imagine anyone of them in a different set of circumstances than that in which the dramatist has presented him. Therefore they are *creatures*, not living men and women. But they are superb creatures, marvellous puppets whose activity we watch with a breathless delight.

W. J. TURNER.

THE PRISONERS OF WAR: A Play in Three Acts. By J. R. ACKERLEY. (Chatto and Windus. 5s.)

Has it any meaning if we say of a book that we think it is extraordinarily well done, but we don't like it? Very little, if we leave the statement in that bare form, but if we try and analyse our dislike we may be able to find good reasons for it, which will modify our original notion that the book is extraordinarily well done. My first reading of Mr. Ackerley's play made a vivid impression. My first impulse was to cry, "This is superb, magnificent, perfect!" On reading it again, after an interval, I found that it again held my attention absorbingly, but not so absorbingly that I was unable to say "This is false, distorted, unreal, horrible!" Is it possible to compose this discrepancy? I think it is. A diseased foot is not a beautiful sight, but it could be described in such a way as to hold the listener spellbound in horror. This is what

Mr. Ackerley has done, and it demanded a rare gift of writing and a good deal of knowledge, and knowledge of a kind that is not to be found under every bush. However, although the diseased foot admirably described may, if you like, become *qua* description a work of art, it nevertheless remains confined within those limitations which make it a diseased foot. Mr. Ackerley has taken an unpleasant situation—the situation of a group of war prisoners interned in Switzerland, who have got upon one another's nerves. Their enforced idleness, the monotony of their existence, is horrible enough, but Mr. Ackerley introduces into this warped existence an exceptionally narrow and unbalanced personality, the character of Conrad. The combination of Conrad and his environment produces disaster—Conrad becomes mad, and another officer kills himself. The unrelieved gloom and the unpleasantness of the play are not due to the unpleasantness of any one of the features. Unpleasant details are as good as pleasant details, ugly details as good as beautiful details for the purpose of the artist. The depressing aesthetic effect of *Prisoners of War* is due to its leaving one impoverished instead of enriched.

We feel that we have been cheated—although by a very cunning hand—for at the end of the play Conrad, who is the chief and all-important character, is less than Conrad at the beginning of the play. He begins as a man, he ends as a sort of psychological freak. Therefore, we lose interest in him, and we feel the conclusion of the play is false, because intellectual, artificial, and forced into one dimension. Adelby, another of the prisoners, suffers the same diminution. Only Grayle, Tetford, and Rickman remain, but they were, from the beginning, merely cleverly differentiated types in whom we were not asked to take interest. Mr. Ackerley's aim was to create a character, and explore it under given circumstances. But Conrad and his circumstances, taken all together, as a whole, do not make a reality. *The Prisoners of War* remains a melodrama in spite of its unconventional material, but a first-rate melodrama.

W. J. T.



## Among New Books

SIXTY-FOUR, NINETY-FOUR. By R. H. MOTTRAM. Chatto & Windus. 7s. 6d.

As a record of the war from an individual point of view, Mr. Mottram's book is often interesting but never arresting. His effort to be dispassionate has robbed his story of vitality; so that a bombardment is no more startling than a rest-camp discussion of tactics. Skene's gradual disillusionment is well set-off by the enthusiasm of the New Armies and the Americans, but his spasmodic passion for Madeleine is commonplace and unconvincing. It is better than many war books, but it does not appease the desire for something more than "Histories, necessarily official, memoirs, necessarily personal, novels, necessarily fiction." Beside such a work as Tolstoy's it is a pale and inadequate representation.

INNER CIRCLE. By ETHEL COLBURN MAYNE. (Constable. 6s.)

Eleven short stories by Miss Mayne furnishes an evening with entertainment that is neither radical nor transient. Her feeling for life accommodates itself neatly to the short story form, and this collection, like her former volume, "Nine of Hearts," is given a unity of impression lacking in most of its kind, by the similarity of its themes. Miss Mayne's outlook and style have been compared with Katherine Mansfield's; one characteristic which they certainly share is an explorative sympathy for the sexual sensibilities of women. These stories are not altogether free of that exploitation of the sense of pity on which so much distinguished modern fiction reclines, but Miss Mayne's general manner of treatment is a distinct intellectualisation of her delicate perceptions.

CARAVAN. THE ASSEMBLED TALES OF JOHN GALSWORTHY. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

A remarkably substantial volume (960 pages), containing, the author says, "all my tales falling short of the novel in length, written between the years 1900 and 1923 inclusive." It confirms us in our opinion of the sentimental origin of most of Mr. Galsworthy's work. The insistent "social pity" which is the main-spring of the majority of these narratives pokes its cloven hoof very obviously through the shorter of these pieces and prevents their reality. In the longer pieces Mr. Galsworthy's virtues as observer and recorder to some extent redeem this radical defect.

TWO PLAYS. By SEAN O'CASEY. Macmillan. 7s. 6d.

Mr. O'Casey's play, *Juno and the Paycock*, was performed with enormous success at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, and Mr. James Stephen has declared that Mr. O'Casey is "the greatest dramatic find of modern times." *Juno and the Paycock* does not move us to such language, but it is unquestionably a good play. It deals with life in Dublin during 1922, and shows how an ordinary Irish family suffered in the frenzied political disorders of the time when men and boys were murdered in broad daylight under the eyes of a terrorised population. The characters are well drawn and the dialogue is picturesque and amusing, having a vivacity and a lyricism that distinguishes it from that of the ordinary "good" play.

HALF A MINUTE'S SILENCE AND OTHER STORIES. By Maurice Baring. Heinemann. 8s. 6d. net.

Ten of these stories are Russian, imitated, one cannot help feeling, from Tchekov. Yet, though they contain all the accidents of the model—land-owners, sunflower-seed, troikas, and dilapidated country houses—their

inconsequence is only inconsequence, their slightness has no force of suggestion. *The Police Officer* is good, however, and amongst the others, *Fête Galante* and *The Shadow of Midnight*. A clumsy over-insistence spoils the two longest stories: in both cases an amusing fantasy is too heavily loaded with strings of commonplace deductions, and the same fault, in addition to an anti-climax, destroys the humour of *A Luncheon Party*.

**THE CAMBRIDGE BOOK OF PROSE AND VERSE.** From the Beginnings to the Cycles of Romance. Edited by GEORGE SAMPSON. Cambridge University Press. 10s. 6d.

Illustrative extracts from the poets, chroniclers and theologians dealt with in the corresponding section of the "Cambridge History of English Literature." A dangerous way of scraping acquaintance with literature, but justified in this early period by the general unfamiliarity of the subject. Anglo-Saxon writings are translated, which cuts the knot of a problem to be resolved only by a knowledge of the language. A successful compromise is made with Middle English by printing a glossary beneath the text. Mr Sampson's work has been done well, and if his book habituates the general reader to pre-Chaucerian literature, it will have been magnificently worth doing.

**PIERCE PENILESS.** HIS SUPPLICATION TO THE DIVELL. (1592.) By THOMAS NASH. Lane. 2s. 6d. (paper) and 3s.

This volume and the one below are additions to The Bodley Head Quartos. This series of reprints, well edited and well printed, has now a dozen titles, all of them of uncommon interest and not otherwise accessible to the ordinary reader.

Nash's pamphlet is typical of its author and of Elizabethan journalism at its best. The defence of poetry and of plays, into which he digresses here, helps us to appreciate the attitude of the populace of London to its new literature.

**THE ENGLISH ROMAYNE LIFE.** (1582.) By ANTHONY MUNDAY. Lane. 2s. 6d. (paper) and 3s.

A bright account of the corrupt and superstitious practices of the Romans by a staunch Protestant who wormed his way into the English Seminary at Rome. On his return to England he became a spy and helped to bring his former hosts to the gallows.

**THE GOLDEN KEYS.** By VERNON LEE. The Bodley Head. 7s. 6d.

Most descriptive books of dilatory travel are written, it would seem, for the sake of their purgative effect on the authors. They are a handy means of getting rid of inchoate musings and formless emotions, or for airing opinions in an irresponsible manner. Miss Lee does these things gracefully in a sensitive prose. Her recollections have just the æsthetic value—and not more than that—which she missed in the atmosphere of Venice: "The virtue of paucity, the stimulus of the insufficient and the unfinished, the spell of the fragment forcing us to furnish what it lacks out of our own heart and mind."

**CHARLES DICKENS AND OTHER VICTORIANS.** By SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH. Cambridge University Press. 10s. 6d.

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch writes about Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope, Gaskell and Disraeli. The two longest sections, on the two first-mentioned novelists, were papers read to a Cambridge literary society, and are similar in tone and treatment to the popular weekly letters of "John O'London." They are likely to perform much the same function—that of converting a wide audience of little natural responsiveness to literature, to a recognition of its moral and civic gratifications. Sir Arthur makes skilful use in his propaganda of such roundabout auxiliaries as patriotism, democracy, history and the sentiment of hearty living, but avoids any sort of frontal attack on his subjects. It is only through lack of a more suitable category that this volume has to be classified under "CRITICISM."

## THE CALENDAR

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS MYSTICISM. By JAMES H. LEUBA.  
Kegan Paul. 15s.

An exhaustive examination of the pretensions of certain experiences of "rapture" to be means of union with the Infinite. The feeling of intense satisfaction enjoyed in these states is really due to a balance reached within the mind itself, not to any harmony with the outer universe, or any revelation as to its nature. Criticism of the value of these states is hostile to those which do not lead to a more sensitive organisation of responses, and this by no means excludes all mystics from the roll of honour—only their qualifications are not quite those which they thought they were.